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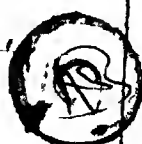
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Short Histories of  
the Literatures of  
the World XV.  
Edited by Edmund Gosse,  
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## LATIN LITERATURE

By MARCUS DIMSDALE, M A

LONDON WILLIAM HINEMANN

# A History of LATIN LITERATURE

BY

MARCUS SOUTHWELL DIMSDALE



London  
WILLIAM HEINEMANN  
MCMXV

*London William Heinemann 1915*

## EDITOR'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE vast progress made in all departments of literary scholarship, and the minuteness with which knowledge is now subdivided, threaten to leave the general reader bewildered at the diversity and bulk of what is presented to him. The exact historian of literature concentrates his attention on so narrow a field that he cannot be expected to appeal to a wide class; those who study what he writes are, or must in some measure grow to be, his fellow-specialists. But the more precisely each little area is surveyed in detail, the more necessary does it become for us to return at frequent intervals to an inspection of the general scheme of which each topographical study is but a fragment magnified. It has seemed that of late the minute treatment of a multitude of intellectual phenomena has a little tended to obscure the general movement of literature in each race or country. In a crowd of handbooks, each of high authority in itself, the general trend of influence or thread of evolution may be lost.

The absence of any collection of summaries of the literature of the world has led the Publisher and the Editor of the present series to believe that a succession of attractive volumes, dealing each with the history of

## EDITOR'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION

literature in a single country, would be not less welcome than novel. The Editor has had the good fortune to interest in this project a number of scholars whose names guarantee a rare combination of exact knowledge with the power of graceful composition. He has the pleasure of being able to announce that this interest has taken a practical shape, and that already there is being prepared for the press a considerable series of volumes, most of them composed by men pre-eminently recognised for their competence in each special branch of the subject. If there are one or two names less generally familiar to the public than the rest, the Editor confidently predicts that the perusal of their volumes will more than justify his invitation to them to contribute. Great care will be taken to preserve uniformity of form and disposition, so as to make the volumes convenient for purposes of comparison, and so as to enable the literatures themselves to be studied in proper correlation.

In preparing these books, the first aim will be to make them exactly consistent with all the latest discoveries of fact, and the second, to ensure that they are agreeable to read. It is hoped that they will be accurate enough to be used in the class-room, and yet pleasant enough and picturesque enough to be studied by those who seek nothing from their books but enjoyment. An effort will be made to recall the history of literature from the company of sciences which have somewhat unduly borne her down—from philology, in particular, and from political history. These have their interesting and valuable influence upon literature, but she is independent of them, and is strong enough to be self-reliant.

## EDITOR'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Hence, important as are the linguistic origins of each literature, and delightful as it may be to linger over the birth of language, little notice will here be taken of what are purely philological curiosities. We shall tread the ground rapidly until we reach the point where the infant language begins to be employed in saying something characteristic and eloquent. On the other hand, a great point will be made, it is hoped, by dwelling on the actions, the counter-influences, of literatures on one another in the course of their evolution, and by noting what appear to be the causes which have led to a revival here and to a decline there. In short, we shall neglect no indication of change or development in an adult literature, and our endeavour will be to make each volume a well-proportioned biography of the intellectual life of a race, treated as a single entity. Literature will be interpreted as the most perfect utterance of the ripest thought by the finest minds, and to the classics of each country rather than to its oddities and rather than to its obsolete features will particular attention be directed.

EDMUND GOSSE.



## P R E F A C E

IN writing this book I have aimed at tracing the development of Latin Literature, and at setting forth the influences which determined the character of its successive phases. Even more have I desired to give an idea of the personalities and the productions of the great Latin writers, for these are the fruits of the tree, the growth of which it has been my purpose to indicate.

The book is intended for the general reader, and therefore I have dwelt on the broader aspects of the subject more than on details and points of controversy, while for purposes of illustration I have rather sought than shunned famous and familiar passages. For the same reason, and in accordance with the practice followed in this series, all quotations have been given in English. In the case of the great poets, this is a method which has called for some hardihood, and in a few cases I have availed myself of the help of other translators; but for the most part the verse translations are my own.

The question as to when Latin Literature came to an end, may be answered in more ways than one. But it may be said that with Rutilius Namatianus Latin writing



ceased to be national, and that with Boethius it ceased to be literary. These two circumstances have suggested the approximate limits of the present survey. In the seventh century, the nadir, as Hallam calls it, of the human mind in Europe, the classical tradition became for the time extinct, and the revival of Latin scholarship discernible in the eleventh and twelfth centuries died away on the emergence of the modern European literatures without having produced any works of considerable importance. As for the renewed study of classical antiquity which was the main feature of the Renaissance, and the continued though partial use of the Latin language as a means of communication among the learned, which was one of its consequences, it is only by an extended interpretation of the term that they could be included in a history of Latin Literature.

In writing such a book as this I have throughout been conscious of my obligations to other works. Professor Wight Duff's *Literary History of Rome*, which was not published until about a quarter of this book was already in type, has helped me much, if only in directing my attention to points and sources of information which I might otherwise have overlooked. M. René Pichon's *Histoire de la Littérature Latine* is, like the present volume, a comprehensive sketch, and, apart from particular passages in which I have reproduced some of his criticism, I have derived much help from it in estimating the influences which affected the development of Latin Literature, while

in the final chapter, which is something in the nature of a *catalogue raisonné* of authors, I have profited by his guidance in the orientation and, to some extent, the characterisation of writers, mainly ecclesiastical, with whom I have only a limited acquaintance. In treating the Imperial period I have received many suggestions, in some cases as to the selection of passages for illustration, from Mr. H. E. Butler's *Post-Augustan Poets*. Besides these histories of Latin Literature, I should make particular reference to the volumes on *The Roman Poets of the Republic*, *Virgil*, and *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age*, by Professor Sellar; to studies on Latin poetry by M. Patin, M. Plessis, and Professor Tyrrell; to the chapters on Literature in Mommsen's *History of Rome*; and to both series of *Lectures and Essays* by Professor H. Nettleship.

To the above and other works references will be found in footnotes. I have not added a bibliography of Latin Literature because it must have included an impracticably long list of editions of Latin authors. The last remark reminds me of the obligations inevitably incurred by one who attempts a survey of Latin Literature to the commentators who have elucidated the Latin writers. No one can write of Lucretius or Catullus without being aware of his debt to Munro and Robinson Ellis. Without pursuing this subject further, I will not deny myself the pleasure of recognising in connection with Cicero how much I owe to the editions of Professor J. S. Reid, and those two other Cambridge scholars, Professor Wilkins and

Sir J. E. Sandys, who have made the study of Cicero's rhetorical works their especial province. I have to thank Mr. Frowde (Clarendon Press) and Mr. Dent respectively for permission to quote from metrical versions of *Horace's Odes* by Mr. W. E. Marris, and of the *Æneid* by Mr. Fairfax Taylor (Temple Classics Series). •

Finally my warmest thanks are due to Professor Bury for his kindness in reading the proof-sheets and making suggestions. But since I allowed him very little time in which to do this I take all responsibility for errors and oversights.

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# A HISTORY OF LATIN LITERATURE

## I

### THE BEGINNINGS

FOR Horace \* Roman literature began with Livius Andronicus—that is to say, it began with the imitation of the Greeks. But despite the fact that it is to a very great extent imitative few will deny that Roman literature is somehow different from Greek. And this difference, while it is to be accounted for partly by other causes—as, for example, that Roman literature is largely the expression of a different national character—seems also to be due to the fact that the two literatures sprang from different roots. The ancestors of the Romans belonged to the Indo-Germanic family ; but it cannot be proved that they belonged to that branch of it which was most nearly related to the Greeks. Philologists tell us that the similarities of language are not such as to show a closer connection between any two members of that family than between any other two. If there be two members of the family which show such important coincidences as to make it probable that they are more nearly connected than the rest, these are not the Italic and the Greek, but the Italic and the Celtic nationalities. It may be that, as

\* *Ad nostrum tempus Livi scriptoris ab ævo* —Hor. *Ep.* II. i. 62.

Mommsen thinks, there was a time when the ancestors of Greek and Roman dwelt together and developed the beginnings of a Græco-Roman civilisation in common ; but what is practically certain is that this was not the case as regards literature. "Language knows no Græco-Roman period as far as literature is concerned." \* The earliest word in Latin for a ceremonial utterance, *carmen*, is identical with the Sanskrit, *casman*, and has no counterpart in Greek. The characteristic Italian rhythm, of which there are examples in the Latin Oscan and Pelignian dialects, has more affinity to the Indian *çloka* and the Teutonic long line than to the Greek hexameter. † Fragments of verse in this metre exhibit two peculiarities, alliteration and assonance, of which the former is characteristic of early Teutonic poetry, but not of Greek, while the latter does not appear in Greek at all.

While the Saturnian metre did not survive the onset of Hellenic influences, the other two phenomena persisted. Alliteration appears as a literary device in the Latin poets, whether applied rudely, as by Ennius, or with consummate art, as by Virgil. Assonance ‡ seen in primitive Italian maxims and in the song of the Arval brothers, and traceable in literary Latin of the best period, § perhaps maintained an obscure existence in the pasquinades

\* Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays*, first series, "The Earliest Latin Literature"

† Though F Allen has shown that not improbably all three had a common origin (*Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung*, vol. xxv. 556).

‡ E.g. *Térra péstem tenéto sálus huc manéto*, and *Lúe rúe*, in the *Carmen Arvale*

§ E.g. Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 695. Virg. E. viii. 81 Cf what F Myers says of the latest development of Virgilian verse. *Classical Essays*, "Virgil," p. 139.

of the people, and finally emerged in the rhyming hymns of the fourth century after Christ.

For these reasons a consideration of the first beginnings of Roman literature, obscure as they are, is not to be omitted.

• *A priori* there is force in the contention that a nation which, like the Italic, produced genuine poetry at a later stage in its development must have possessed the root of the matter in itself, and the indications of the rudiments of poetic art in Italy, if meagre, are undeniable. Not much, indeed, can be built on the early recognition of *Carmenta*, nymph of the springs and goddess of prophecy, whose predictions were transmitted by prophets (*carmentes*) in the form of a *carmen*, or solemn utterance. But besides *Carmenta* the Latins had also a muse of song, *Casmena*, and, despite what has been urged to the contrary,\* there is no reason to doubt that *vates* is from a Latin root, nor to disbelieve the statement of Varro that it was applied of old to poets. And yet one may admit that the Latins had poets without crediting them with much in the way of poetical attainment. If, in the words of Mommsen, "the earliest chant in the view of the Romans was that which the leaves sang to themselves in the green solitude of the forest," and if "the whisperings and pipings of the favourable spirit (*Faunus*) were repeated to men by the singer (*Vates*)," it must be conceded that in the reputed Vaticinia which have been preserved there is little enough of the "beauty born of murmuring sound." They are either pronouncements of an oracular kind, like the directions for ensuring the capture of Veii, preserved in Livy (5, 16), or precepts

\* Mommsen, *R. H. I.* 240 n ; Sellar, *Poets of the Roman Republic*, p. 33 ; but cf. Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays*, first series, p. 53.



of practical wisdom such as that attributed to the *vates* Marcius, "Be first to be silent, last to speak"—precepts not generically different from the maxims of Appius Claudius or of Cato. Earlier than these were charms \* and lullabies † and some ancient maxims ‡ of husbandry. In point of fact it is unlikely that the poetical aptitudes of the early Latins were anything but insignificant in view of what we know of them in other ways. They were peasants, absorbed in agriculture or war, dwelling inland, and therefore wanting the stimulus to the imagination which comes of maritime enterprise. They were religious, and, like the Greeks, they personified abstractions: they conceived their gods as men and women; but, unlike them, they did not proceed beyond personification; there was with them no development of legend, and therefore no material for such poetry as that of the Greeks. The form assumed by their religion was a strong sense of reciprocal obligation between themselves and the deities they worshipped. The sentiment of this duty and the care to fulfil all its requirements, scrupulously was what the Romans called *religio*. The minute observance of all the rules of the worship seemed to them the only way to secure the goodwill and assistance of the gods. This being so, it is not surprising that the most important surviving remains of primitive Latin literature are religious litanies.

In March, when, according to the ancient calendar, the new year and the time for warlike operations began, the leaping priests of Mars (*Salii*) performed a war-dance, beating with short sticks on the sacred shields of the

\* See p. 2, note †. † *Lálla, lálla, lálla, dórmr aut lácta.*

‡ *Hibérno pílvre véro lúto  
grándia fárra, Camílle, métes.*

god, and accompanying their dance with song. This song consisted of two parts, one addressed to the gods in general, the other consisting of verses addressed to separate deities. The first is lost ; of the latter a few lines remain. Quintilian says that the song of the Salii was hardly understood by the priests themselves, and Horace protests that the admiration professed for it in some quarters was dictated by jealousy of the writers of his own day. Yet these over-indulgent admirers of antiquity may have maintained that the couplet \* preserved for us by Terentianus Maurus is not without archaic dignity. The meaning of the words is : " Lord of the light, whenever thou dost thunder, then all men that hear thee thunder tremble because of thee."

More important, because better preserved, is the song of the field brethren (*Fratres Arvales*). Yearly in May, when the crops were ripening, this primitive corporation of twelve members celebrated a three days' festival to *Dea Dia*, the goddess of the country. On the second day of this festival, their heads adorned with garlands made of ears of wheat, they performed a solemn dance in three-time (*tripodantes*), while they sang a song which has been preserved together with the minutes of a meeting of the order in 218 A.D. The six Saturnian lines of which it is composed consist mostly of brief ejaculations, thrice repeated, to the Lares for help, to Marmar or Mars for forbearance, interjected with directions addressed to the dancers individually or collectively.

It was not to be expected that these litanies should possess literary merit. Early stereotyped, religious feeling forbade alteration in their phrasing. Yet the practice of

\* *Cume tonas Laucesie præ tet tremontis*  
*Quot ibi te vires auderont tonare.*

addressing the gods in solemn prayer must have tended to give language a definite and elevated form. The tone of primitive prayer among the Romans is, however, in consequence of their peculiar conception of the relations between gods and men, rather legal than devotional, as it is more devotional than poetical. Such, for instance, is the character of the prayers, perhaps more ancient than the *Carmen Arvale* itself, given by Cato in his work on husbandry. The head of the household, in the form prescribed for visiting the fields in the spring,\* prays Mars to "keep off, defend, repel, all plagues seen or unseen," and he who uses the formula for clearing a wood † addresses the Genius of the place in the words "be you goddess, be you god," to avoid the possibility of calling on the wrong deity.

More promising of future development, because more spontaneous, as born of pleasure rather than of fear or calculation, were the beginnings of drama at Rome. In Italy, as in Greece, comedy arose out of country festivals. Horace describes how the stout countrymen of long ago signalled the conclusion of their labours by merry-making, and how, originating in this practice, "the Fescennine licence uttered rustic abuse in alternate lines." The epithet has been derived from *Fescennium*, a village in Etruria, but it is more probably connected with *fascinum*, ‡ the spell of the evil eye. Consistently with this explanation we find that Fescennine verses were uttered at weddings and at triumphs, times of rejoicing at which the influence of the evil eye was especially to be feared. However this may be, in the rustic abuse in alternate lines existed a germ of drama.

\* Cato, *De re rustica*, 141.

† *Ibid.* 139.

‡ The adjective *Fescenninus* presupposes the substantive *fescennus*, and the word *fescennus* was used of those *qui fascinum depellere putabantur* (Paulus, § 86).

But there was another rudimentary form of drama possibly developed out of the Fescennine songs. It resembled them in consisting in the interchange of rude verses,\* but was more distinctly dramatic than they, for it was from this that the transition to a play with a regular plot was made.† Absence of plot, then, was another distinguishing feature of this form, and its name *satura* probably means a medley, and has reference to the same feature. This is more likely in itself, and more in consonance with the meaning of *satura* in other connections than that the word means "the dance of the full men," as explained by Mommsen, or "the goat-dance," with reference to the resemblance of the rustic performers clad in goat-skins to satyrs, as is held by Ribbeck.

It was, in all likelihood, with the *satura* in his mind that Vergil wrote (*Georgics*, II. 385): "The Ausonian farmers, too, a race that came from Troy, sport with uncouth verses and unrestrained laughter, and put on terrifying masks of hollow bark." There is yet a third form of drama to which he may be referring, the Atellan play. But Vergil is speaking of Latin farmers, whereas the Atellan play was almost certainly Campanian in origin, and was not naturalised at Rome till the time of the second Punic war. The name seems rightly connected with Atella in Campania, and the Atellan play is spoken of by Cicero and Tacitus as Oscan. The characteristic feature of the Atellan play was the recurrence of four stock characters (Maccus, the fool, Bucco, the braggart, Pappus, the old

\* Livy, referring to the *satura* in its original form, writes *Fescennino versu similem temere ac rudem alternis iaciebant* (vii. 2, 7).

† *Livius*: . . . *qui ab saturis ausus est primus argumento fabulam serere* (Livy, vii 2, 8).

dotard, and Dossennus, the cunning old man), with corresponding masks. This was a feature which lent itself to improvisation, for among actors familiar with what was required, with the distribution of the masks the play could begin.

If in these rudimentary forms we see the possibility of a further development of drama, we may discover the germ of epic poetry in the dirges and songs in praise of ancestors. Dirges containing the praises of the dead were originally sung by members of the family of the departed, later by hired mourning women (*præficæ*). But these dirges were superseded by oratorical eulogies, of which the earliest mentioned was that pronounced on Brutus in 509 B.C., and by the time of Plautus they were evidently held in little estimation. More interesting are the traces of songs in praise of ancestors. That at one time such were current there is no doubt. Cato \* records that they were sung by individual guests at banquets, and Varro † that they were sung by boys with or without the accompaniment of the flute. The latter was no doubt the earlier practice. On passages like these and on the poetical character of the early history of Rome Niebuhr based his hypothesis of an early popular ballad literature, amounting, he maintained, to epic poems of considerable length, through the agency of which the traditional account of the beginnings of Rome grew up and found its way into history.

Niebuhr's theory went much too far; but something survives the attacks made upon it. There is no question as to the existence of the songs, only as to their character. Sellar's ‡ arguments, aimed at minimising their

\* *Cic. Brutus*, 75. *Tusc. Disp.* iv 2, 3.

† Nonius, i. 105

‡ *Roman Poets of the Republic*, p 38

importance, are of varying cogency. It may be admitted that, as he points out, the passages referring to the songs would show that they were short, and that they were due to patrician family pride rather than popular. But the inference of their insignificance from the fact of their disappearance fails to make sufficient allowance for the sweeping character of the invasion of Hellenic influences. Little esteemed, no doubt, they were, for the admiration for things Hellenic was strongest precisely in those circles in which the songs had been current. The argument drawn from the fact that the songs left no trace in the shape of an epic diction is one which tells only against their poetical qualities. And it is likely that they were prosaic—less poetical, at any rate, than the fragments of Nævius' *Punic War*, if more so than the Scipionic epitaphs.

The beginnings of prose are subsequent to those of poetry. They presuppose the art of writing. How old this art was at Rome is a matter of conjecture. Written records were already known in the regal period; but for the beginning of the art of writing we must go much further back. The so-called "laws of the kings" was a collection of legal and religious maxims of great antiquity, but in their original form they were versified. There is, however, no reason to doubt that the

*treaties of the kings*  
*With Gabii or the ancient Sabines made*  
*Hor Epp II 1 24*

were in prose, as well as certain early forms of record.

Such were the first beginnings of indigenous literature. They contain the potential germs of epic and drama. But these germs did not fructify. In Mommsen's words, "the development of the fine arts in Italy was rather a shrivelling up than an expanding into bloom." To a

certain extent this is true. The religious litanies did not give birth to lyrical poetry. The funeral dirges were first relegated to hired mourners, and then superseded by funeral orations. The songs in praise of ancestors ceased to be sung, according to Cato, many generations before his time. Yet it is doubtful whether Mommsen is right in finding the cause of this undeniable phenomenon in the conclusion that the Latins did not possess an original gift of song. Rather is it to be accounted for by the circumstances in which Rome acquired the headship of Italy. A small community by the Tiber, starting from humble beginnings, encompassed by enemies, torn by intestine dissension, did after five hundred years of struggle achieve a success which may well have seemed unattainable. She secured domestic peace by the union of the orders in 287 B.C., and almost at the same time (268 B.C.) she achieved the headship of Italy, the first, the longest, and the most difficult step towards the conquest of the world. But she had to pay for her success. Nothing is to be had for nothing; and the price which Rome paid for gaining the sovereignty of Italy was the stunting, the arrest of her literary development. This is why, as Cato says, "the art of the poet in former times was not respected; if any one occupied himself therewith, or frequented banquets, he was called an idler." The fact was the community required the soldier and did not require the poet. But that this feeling with regard to art was imposed by stress of circumstances is shown by the fact that when this relaxed there was a change. A day was added to the *ludi Romani* after the conclusion of each of the great internal crises. Originally lasting one day, the festival was increased to two upon the expulsion of the kings (510 B.C.), to three after the settlement which followed the secession to

the sacred mount (494 B.C.), to four after the passing of the Licinian rogations (367 B.C.).

The last occasion saw the appointment of *œdiles curules*, who were charged with the superintendence of the festival, which then lost its occasional character. Four years later a temporary wooden stage was first erected for representations during the first three days of the games, and from this occasion dates the improvement in the *satura* due, according to Livy, \* to the imitation of the more artistic music and dancing exhibited by Etruscan performers.

As far as prose was concerned, it was, indeed, fostered by the struggle between the orders. From it resulted (450 B.C.) that codification of existing custom known as the twelve tables, which from the literary point of view was the first attempt to adapt the Latin language to the purposes of written prose. The language of the fragments, though it has no doubt been modernised in many cases, is archaic, but very much less so than that of the song of the Arval brothers. The laws consist of a series of terse directions, given in the third person of the imperative, which is used indifferently whether the meaning is "may" or "must," qualified in some cases by a condition, always expressed in the indicative. No distinctive pronouns mark a change of subject, and the object is often left unexpressed. For instance, in the rules for the preliminaries to a trial we read: "If he [the plaintiff] summons him [the defendant], let him [the defendant] go. If he [the defendant] does not go, let him [the plaintiff] call [some one] to witness."

But rudimentary though they were in style, the literary influence of the twelve tables was very great. Down to Cicero's time the youth of Rome learnt them by heart.

\* Livy, vii, 2.



From them they derived their first idea of written prose, and many a phrase and allusion in Augustan poetry bear witness to the time when the code of the decemvirs was the Roman's Bible.

As with law so with oratory. The stress of political strife must have been favourable to its growth rather than the reverse. In the year 280 B.C. Appius Claudius Cæcus delivered a speech urging that no terms should be made with the invader Pyrrhus. This, the earliest speech which is known to have been committed to writing, was published, and existed in Cicero's time. Nor did verse cease to be produced. Appius Claudius made a collection of maxims in Saturnian verse. The best known of the three preserved is that which asserts that every man is the architect of his fortunes.

Besides these there were the epitaphs on L. Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, *cos* 298 B.C., and his son, L. Cornelius Scipio, *cos* 258 B.C., of which the latter is undoubtedly the earlier. Each records in six Saturnian lines the name, the qualities, and the exploits of the departed. Niebuhr suggested that they were fragments of dirges. This is unlikely, for they seem to be complete in themselves. Concise, masculine, and restrained in expression, they are thoroughly Roman in tone.

And yet both the maxims of Appius and the Scipionic epitaphs show symptoms of Greek influence. The maxims were probably drawn from a Greek source, whether Pythagorean, as Cicero thought, or excerpted from some writer of the New Comedy. The epitaphs owe their existence to the adoption of a Greek custom by a family always foremost in the pursuit of Greek culture. Both the first are, as it were, ripples of that rising tide of Hellenism of which it is now time to speak.

## II

### THE INVASION OF HELLENIC INFLUENCE

GREEK influences had not been wanting at Rome from the earliest times. The Romans had received their alphabet from the Greeks. The Sibylline books were in Greek. The national festival (the *ludi Romani*) and the Servian constitution show indications of Greek influence. Some barbarous transliterations of Greek names and words bear witness to early commercial intercourse between Roman and Greek.

But there had been no taking over of Greek literature and culture such as was now to be effected. The causes of the change were these. The conflict, external and internal, which, while it lasted, had absorbed the energies of Rome, was at an end. Almost simultaneously Rome achieved the union of the orders (287 B.C.) and the headship of Italy (268 B.C.). The Pyrrhic war (280-272 B.C.), ended by the capture of Tarentum, brought her into close contact with the Greeks of Southern Italy, the first Punic war, which followed it (264-241 B.C.), with those of Sicily. Her literary development atrophied by the long struggle from which she had emerged, conscious of new wants and an enlarged intellectual horizon, Rome was confronted with a literature which had passed through all its stages and stood complete in its unparalleled beauty. Parvenue among the nations, she required at

once education and amusement. For the first there was no text-book but the twelve tables, for the second no plays but the formless *saturæ*.

Thus it was that, in circumstances typical of the situation, artistic literature began with an epic and a play translated from the Greek.

Andronicus, a Greek or semi-Greek, was brought to Rome on the capture of Tarentum (272 B.C.). He became the slave of Livius, a noble Roman, taught his children, and on being manumitted as a reward for his services took the name of L. LIVIUS ANDRONICUS. Thereafter he continued to occupy himself as a teacher of Greek and Latin, and also as an actor and stage-manager. Out of these occupations rose his literary production. To provide himself with a text-book for his pupils he made a Latin translation of the *Odyssey*. To provide a *répertoire* for himself and his company he reproduced Greek plays in Latin form. In 240 B.C.—the date is significant, for it was the year after the end of the first Punic war—a tragedy and a comedy by him were acted at the *ludi Romani*, the first plays with regular plots ever seen upon the Roman stage. The recognition of his literary efforts did not stop here. In 207 B.C., with a view to averting disasters which were apprehended in consequence of a prodigy, he was commissioned by the Pontifices to compose an ode to be sung by twenty-seven maidens going in procession, and seemingly\* another later, perhaps to celebrate the victory of Sena won by the son of his patron. Further, in compliment to him the temple of Minerva was assigned as a place of meeting to writers and actors,

\* The ode sung *quia prosperius res publica populi Romani geri coepta esset* (*Festus*, p. 333) appears to be distinct from that just referred to which is recorded by Livy, xxvii. 27.

introduced. If one is to judge him by the standard of later attainment, one may readily concur with Cicero,\* who, with reference to its archaic stiffness, declared that Livius' *Odyssey* resembled the wooden images attributed to Dædalus, and that his plays were not worth a second reading. Yet he is important as the initiator of that art of translation, paraphrastic, but with a striving after poetical expression, which was the medium through which the Hellenic drama was presented to the Romans for a hundred and fifty years.

Five years after the first performance of a play by Livius a new writer, NÆVIUS, appeared upon the scene. In more than one respect Nævius was a complete contrast to Livius. Livius was a semi-Greek, a freedman, and a schoolmaster; Nævius a Latin settled in Campania, a Roman citizen, and a soldier. At least he fought in the first Punic war. This implies that he was not an actor. Thus he did not produce his plays as an incident in his profession.

Like Livius he wrote both tragedies and comedies. As an instance of the former we may take the *Lycurgus*

In the fragments of this play, which follows the outline of the *Bacchæ*, we catch a glimpse of the mænads "bearing crested snakes unharmed" and hear the haughty orders of the Edonian king for their arrest and punishment. The soldiers announce how they found the revellers sporting by the stream, and how they "come like dumb beasts unterrified to death." Then we have Liber himself in altercation with the king, and finally, at a word from the god, the palace of Lycurgus bursts into "a flower of flame" and a voice is heard bidding those within bring the king, the son of Dryas, forth.†

\* *Brutus*, 71.

† Cf. Merry, *Fragments of Latin Poetry*, p. 16.

who were incorporated in a guild (*collegium*), as the flute-players had been long before.

The Latin *Odysey* was a sufficiently rude representation of the original. Owing to the difficulty of adapting the Latin language to the dactylic metre—unless, indeed, it were to suit a public not unfamiliar with narrative poems in this metre—Livius wrote it in the Saturnian rhythm. A rough rendering of the first line,

*The man of wiles Ulysses sing me now, Camena,\**

will suffice to show that it has none of the flow of the hexameter. The epic diction, with its wealth of compounds, Livius was unable to reproduce. To judge by the fragments which survive, amounting to some forty lines, the work is that of an unskilful translator. He inserts adjectives, he fails to reproduce characteristic words and expressions, he alters moods, he substitutes metaphors of his own for those in the original. In a word, the work is a paraphrase rather than a translation, and the general effect (though this is in part due to the archaic phraseology and the halting rhythm) is quaint, and even grotesque. In his tragedies (we have titles and fragments of nine belonging to the Trojan cycle) the Greek, writing in the metres of the original, is more successful. Tone and language are more varied, though here again the same features recur. A comparison of Teucer's lament over the ingratitude of a son in the *Ajax Mastigophoros*,

*We render virtue praise, but swifther far  
It melts than frost in springtime,*

with the corresponding passage in Sophocles (*Ajax*, 1266) shows that much has been omitted and a new image

\* See note at the end of this chapter.

These fragments show a great advance on the art of Livius. The verse has a freer movement, the language is more lively and more poetical.

But the bent of Nævius was rather towards comedy than tragedy. We know the names of thirty-four of his comedies as against seven tragedies. The fact that he was the first to fuse two pieces into one (by the process known as *contaminatio*) is perhaps significant of the freedom with which he treated his originals. But, whether a literal translation from some original or not, his description in his *Tarentine Girl* of how a flirt keeps half a dozen admirers in play at once is full of humour and vivacity. In point of fact Nævius' sense of humour got him into trouble. He would fain have reproduced the freedom of political allusion of the old Attic comedy, or transferred the licence of the Fescennines to the stage. One Theodotus he ridiculed by name; he alluded to compromising passages in the early life of the conqueror of Zama, and he fell foul of the Metelli, one of the most powerful families in Rome. He implied that their pre-eminence in the State was not altogether due to merit; \* to which the Metellus attacked, seemingly the consul of 206 B.C., replied in a line threatening that the poet should suffer for his insolence.† The Metelli were able to carry out their threat: Nævius was thrown into prison. He is said to have made his *amende* in two plays written there (the *Harjolus* and the *Leo*), after which he was released on the interposition of the tribunes. But he did not learn prudence by adversity. Again he incurred the penalty of free speech, and this time he went into exile at Utica. This must have been after the end of the Punic war, or

\* *Fato fiunt Metelli consules Romæ.*

† *Dabunt malum Metelli Nævio poeta.*

he could not have gone to Utica except as a deserter. His death is referred to 199 B.C.

Another distinguishing characteristic of Nævius is his national feeling. Perhaps it is not safe to draw inferences from the fact that many of his comedies bear Latin titles ; but from a passage in one of them,\* *The Soothsayer* (*Hariolus*), it would seem that the scene was laid in Italy—in other words, that Nævius was the originator of the Roman comedy (*fabula togata*). Further, he originated the Roman historical play (*fabula prætexta* or *prætextata*). In the *Alimonium Romuli et Remi* he dramatised the legendary origin of the city, and in the *Clastidium* the winning of the *spolia opima* by Marcellus, *cos* 222, from the Insubrian chief Viridumarus under the walls of that township.

But Nævius was to give stronger proof of his originality and patriotism than this. Writing, like Livius, in the Saturnian metre, he produced an epic, originally a continuous whole, later divided into seven books, on the first Punic war. The *Bellum Punicum* is the first original poem in Latin of which we have any knowledge. A remarkable feature in Nævius' treatment of the subject was that he went back to the origin of Rome, and in the two opening books gave the earliest Latin account of the legend of Æneas. In this he was to some extent the predecessor of Vergil. Servius states that the passage in the first *Æneid* which describes how Æneas was caught in a storm, how Venus complained to Jupiter, and how he consoled her by the promise of the future greatness of Rome was "taken from Nævius." The statement is specially significant in the case of the promise of Jupiter,

\* *Quis hert apud te? Prænestini et Lanuvini hospites* (Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*, p. 83).

for it shows that Nævius already had the idea which plays so large a part in the *Æneid*, namely, that the greatness of Rome had a place far back in the past, in the ordinances of fate and the foreknowledge of the gods. It is not certain that Nævius also anticipated Vergil in telling the story of Dido and Æneas. But there are indications that he did so; and certainly the connection of the enmity between the countries with the relations between the founder of Rome and the Carthaginian queen would have been more vital and more telling in Nævius' work, which had the Carthaginian struggle as its sole subject, and was written at a time when that struggle was an absorbing actuality.

Only scanty fragments of the work survive. From them it would seem that the legendary events of the first two books were treated with some imagination and attempt at picturesque effect, but that the bulk of the work was simply versified prose.

*Valerius the consul*

*Takes a portion of his army on an expedition*

is a not unfair example of the narrative, which, it may be remarked, is generally in the historic present. It has been compared not inaptly with the rhyming chronicles of mediæval times. Especially does its style recall that of the Scipionic epitaphs produced some half a century earlier.\* Yet, if unadorned, the narrative is rapid and vigorous, and a couple of lines which tell how Regulus'

\* With

*Tránsit Mēlitam Románuſ, ínſulam íntégram*  
*Úrit popúlátur váſtat, rem hóſtíum concínnat*

compare

*Taúráſia Cíſauna Sámnio cēpt*  
*Súbígit ómne Loucánam ópſídēſque abdoúcit*

Epitaph of Scipio Barbatus, C. I. L. 1, 30.



troops held it better to die where they stood than to return home dishonoured show the spirit which is the special note of Nævius.\*

It is as the predecessor of Vergil that Nævius is significant, and not, as his epitaph † might seem to imply, as the last of the native minstrels. The inferiority of his work in Saturnians to that in the comic fragments shows that he was hampered either by the metre or by the traditions of composition which he followed. Really he was the outcome of the new conditions, and even in the *Punica* his treatment of the gods shows that he was a student of Homer. Only his strong individuality and his national feeling induced him to stand yet awhile on the ancient ways; or perhaps he was too much of a Latin and not enough of a professional to make the technical changes which were to be made by his successor.

Such was ENNIUS (239-169 B.C.), both as the author, like him, of a Latin epic and as a writer at once of tragedy and comedy, although Plautus (254-184 B.C.), who was the first to specialise in comedy, comes next in chronological order. Ennius was born at Rudiaë, a Calabrian town in the territory of the Messapii. This territory, early Hellenised and included in Magna Græcia, had been conquered by the Romans in 266 B.C. and subjected to Latin influences. There is, then, some doubt as to Ennius' precise nationality. He is described as a Greek in *Festus* (p. 293), as a semi-Greek by Suetonius (*De Gramm.* 1.), while he himself traced his descent from

\* *Sésèque vêt perire mávelunt ibidem*  
*Quàm cum stúpro redire ad suos popláres.*

† *Itaque póstquam est órcho tráditus thensaúro*  
*Oblíti sunt Románe lóquier Latíne*

(So Lindsay.)

Gellius, *N. A.* 1, 24, 1.

King Messapus, implying that he was of the aboriginal Italian race. If, as he used to say, he had "three hearts," because he could speak Greek, Oscan, and Latin, it was his Latin heart which his circumstances did most to develop. He fought in the second Punic war, as Nævius had done in the first. In 204 B.C. he was serving in Sardinia, where he was found by Cato, and induced by him to come to Rome. There he gained a living by teaching and writing. He became the friend of eminent men, notably of Scipio Africanus the elder and M. Fulvius Nobilior. The exploits of the former he celebrated in a work called *Scipio*, probably embodied in his *Saturæ*, and the estimation in which he was held by his patron is shown by the fact that his bust was placed in the tomb of the Scipios. The latter he accompanied on his Ætolian campaign (189 B.C.), and described the capture of Ambracia by him in a work of the same name, probably an historical play. Through the influence of Fulvius' son, he became a Roman citizen. When the younger Fulvius founded colonies in Picenum in 184 B.C., Ennius took part in the allotment, and thus acquired the citizenship. He continued, however, to live at Rome, where he died in 169 B.C.

One of the most striking facts about Ennius was his versatility. Plays, comedies, tragedies, and Roman historic dramas, satires, miscellaneous translations, epigrams, and, lastly, an epic in many books, such was the varied output of his long life. Such production was only possible because the works were to a large extent translations or adaptations. Titles and fragments of twenty-two plays by Ennius survive. In the choice of his originals he preferred the Trojan cycle, and of the poets Euripides. Following in the steps of Nævius, but

with greater command of language, Ennius produced free translations of his originals. Cicero, indeed (*De Fin.* 1. 4), instances Ennius' *Medea* among the plays which had been translated "word for word" from the Greek, but elsewhere (*Ac. Post.* 10) he says with more truth that, with the other Roman dramatists, he gave "the purport and not the words" of the Greek poets. As a rule these reproductions can be judged from fragments only, and without the possibility of comparing them with their prototypes. But in the case especially of some fragments of the *Medea* there is this possibility. What is the impression left by the comparison? Sometimes curtailed by omissions, the Latin is on the whole certainly fuller than the original. Expressions are duplicated,\* epithets introduced,† explanations added. The colour is laid on more thickly; finer touches are sometimes effaced; in one instance at least the meaning‡ has been misunderstood. Yet the impression left is that of writing dignified without being bombastic, while from the way in which the natural order of the words is adhered to it is well suited to the comprehension of a homely as well as a cultivated audience. Especially does Ennius excel in passages expressive of strong emotion, such as Cassandra's ecstatic prevision of the horrors to be brought on Troy by Paris (in the *Alexander*, quoted by Cic., *De Div.* 1. 31), and Andromache's gorgeously worded lament over the city's downfall.§

But Ennius did not restrict himself to the reproduction of Greek tragedies. In the *Sabinæ* (rape of the Sabines)

\* Cf. λόγος αὐτὸς (Eur. *Hec.* 298) with *eadem dicta eademque oratio*.

† Cf. Κορινθίαι γυναῖκες (Eur. *Med.* 214) with *Quæ Corinthi arcem altam habetis matronæ opulentæ optimates*

‡ *L.c.* 214-18.

§ Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* III. 19, 44, 45.

he dramatised an episode in the legendary history of Rome, and in the *Ambracia* \* the capture of the Ætolian capital by his patron M. Fulvius Nobilior. For comedy he had less aptitude. The titles of but two of his comedies are known, and in this province he gained only a *succès d'estime*. Volcatius Sedigitus, a critic of the time of Varro, who in his work *De Poetis* enumerated the Latin comic poets in order of merit, put Ennius last. But in his *saturæ* he initiated a fresh branch of literature. It would seem that the native form of drama known as *satura* had been driven off the stage by the adapted Greek play, and that Ennius was the first to produce a form of composition which in its miscellaneous character (extending even to the mixture of metres) and its conversational tone preserved the tradition of the plotless dialogues of the primitive drama. We know at least that in his satires Ennius takes his readers into his confidence ("I never write poetry unless I have the gout," he says), and that, like the later literary satires, they contained dialogue and fable is shown by references to a dialogue between Life and Death, and to the fable of the lark and the husbandman. Of such *saturæ* Ennius is variously stated to have written four or six books; and some or all of the following works, of which we have little more than the titles, may have belonged to them. Of these *Epicharmus* and *Euhemerus*, metrical versions, the first of a poem containing the physical speculations of the philosopher-dramatist, the second of the "sacred chronicle" in which Euhemerus gave a rationalistic explanation of myth, bear witness to the sceptical tendencies of Ennius; the *Hedypagetica*, a rendering in Latin hexameters of a mock-heroic gastronomical poem

\* Possibly, however, it belongs to the *Saturæ*.

by Archestratus of Gela, to his love of good living. Then there were moral maxims (*præcepta* or *protrepticus*), licentious poems in the manner of Sotades, a Greek writer of the third century B.C., and epigrams, one of them an epitaph on Ennius himself, two on Scipio Africanus, the earliest extant attempts in the elegiac metre in Latin, and the book called *Scipio*. All these have been included, though on no definite proof, among the satires. Perhaps there is rather more reason for doing so in the case of *Scipio* than in the others, because it shows a mixture of metres, the description of the calm which prevailed when Scipio crossed to Africa being in trochaic tetrameters, while a fragment referring to the "broad smooth plains of Africa" which witnessed his triumph is in hexameters.

Ennius' greatest work was the *Annals*, an epic in hexameters on the history of Rome from the arrival of Æneas to Ennius' own times—or, to be precise, down to 172 B.C., three years before his death. Great in one sense it certainly was. Only six hundred lines survive, but, to judge by the detail in which the events were treated, the whole must have been considerably longer than the *Iliad*. It does not appear that Ennius, like Nævius described the voyage of Æneas to Africa and the Carthaginian episode. The poem seems to have begun with his arrival in Italy. But the narrative was much fuller, except that Ennius passed lightly over the first Punic war; for, as he says in contemptuous reference to his predecessor,

*Others have writ the tale  
In measures used of old by faun and bard.*

The first three books bring the recital down to the end of the kingly period. The next three continue it to the

end of the conquest of Italy, the sixth book being devoted to the Pyrrhic war. The seventh book described the first and the eighth, ninth, and probably the tenth the second Punic war. The eleventh and twelfth books dealt with the wars with Philip, and the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth with the war with Antiochus and the Ætolian war.

At this point the poet made a fresh start. He resumes the narrative with an account of the Istrian war, which began in 178 B.C. The elder Pliny says that he added the book out of admiration for the courage displayed in that war by T. Cælius Teucer and his brother, one of whom was probably the tribune whose exploits are described in the longest fragment of the book. The events which intervened between the Ætolian war and the beginning of the Istrian war Ennius seems to have passed over rapidly. This is intelligible, for they included the downfall of his patrons, the Scipios. The last two books carried the narrative on to the beginning of the third Macedonian war.

There are two obvious criticisms to be made on the *Annals*. The first is that the writer has confused the provinces of epic and history. It may be admitted that historic events are not the most suitable for epic treatment, and the more nearly contemporary they are the less suitable do they become. But the Hannibalic War became to Romans almost at once their heroic age. And apart from this it is difficult to withhold absolutely from historic epic the justification which is generally accorded to historic tragedy. The *Annals* of Ennius were to the Romans in some measure what the historical plays of Shakespeare are to us.

A stronger ground of objection to the *Annals* may be

found in the fact that the epic is wanting in unity. Unity of form there could not be in a work to which the author could add book after book as Livy did to his history. But unity of idea it had, the idea of the greatness and expanding destinies of Rome. And this is why Mommsen's characterisation of the *Annals* as "this thoroughly anti-national *epos* of a half-Greek scholar" is misleading. It is true that Ennius, owing to the fact of his having been born in a Hellenised town, was enabled to profit by the opportunity which contact with Greek authors had put in the way of Rome, and to approximate more speedily to the suddenly revealed levels of attainment than would have been possible to a pure-bred Roman. But like the Italians generally he had felt the absorptive power of Rome, and it was his proudest boast that he had been made a Roman citizen. It is true, again, that Ennius' epic, written in hexameters instead of in the native Saturnian metre, was largely influenced by the study of the only available model for *epos*. Ennius could not have expressed more clearly his aspiration to be "a second Homer," which his partial countrymen afterwards held him to have realised, than by representing as he does in the dream with which the *Annals* opens that the spirit of Homer had been reincarnated in himself. Ennius borrows Homer's technique, avails himself of his mythological apparatus, applies his similes, and transfers his descriptions to analogous situations of his own. And yet in the whole range of Latin literature there is no work so instinct with national feeling. For more than two centuries it remained the recognised expression of Roman greatness, and if it was displaced by the Vergilian epic, this was due to the art and infinitely wider conception of the later work rather than to its patriotic spirit, for this was inherited from

Ennius. The very essence of Roman steadfastness is in the words

*Broad-based upon her ancient ways and men  
Standeth the Roman State.\**

A gallery of Roman worthies testifies to his unique power of characterisation : Curius,

*Whom none with steel might overcome nor gold ;*

Fabius, whose claim on his country's gratitude is set down in the lines

*One man for us by waiting saved the State.  
Nought for men's talk he cared, for safety much.  
Therefore his fame now ever brighter shines.*

Ennius' versification is far from finished. Lines heavy and spondaic, or stumbling and unarticulated by cæsure, barbarous alliterations or grotesque reproductions of Homeric peculiarities, justify Ovid's description of him as "rude in art." But withal hexameters of stately movement or rugged weight anticipate the Lucretian,† and once or twice‡ even the Vergilian cadence.

Owing to the increased attention to quantity involved in the adaptation of the Latin language to Greek dactylic metre (for in the comic metres the quantity of the thesis except in the final foot was indifferent), Ennius rendered some important services. He did much to settle the law of position and to determine quantities. He fixed the

\* The translation is Tyrrell's (*Lectures on Lat. Poetry*, p 30) slightly altered

† E.g.

*O Romule, Romule die,  
Qualem te patriæ custodem di genuerunt.*

*Corp. Poet Lat.* (Postgate), lxxii. c.

‡ E.g. [*Manus*] *Tendebam lacrimans et blanda voce vocabam.*

*Ibid* xxv c



already existing tendency to shorten unaccented suffixes, and made a much more extended, but still sparing, use of elision, which in the Saturnian had been but rarely employed. In more than one respect Ennius presents a contrast to Nævius. Nævius appears in opposition, Ennius as the friend of the great. Nævius excelled in humour, Ennius in pathos and dignity, being weak where Nævius was strong. In literary matters Nævius was something of a conservative ; Ennius, in sympathy with all that was new in literature and free in thought, was the *coryphaeus* of the new movement. Of the two, Ennius was by far the greater poet. If it was a long step from the translated *Odyssey* to the first attempt at Roman epic, it was a still longer one from the jejuneness of the metrical chronicle to the picturesque imagination shown in the description of Ilia's dream or the auspices of the brothers on the Roman hills by the first artistic Roman poet, the first who brought from pleasant Helicon a crown of never-fading green.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II

### THE SATURNIAN RHYTHM

I HAVE translated the first line of the *Bellum Punicum* into the same metre as "the Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey" which was cited by Lord Macaulay in the introduction to his "Lays of Ancient Rome" as "a perfect Saturnian line" But I have done so only because the lines in the nursery rhyme contain the same number of syllables as a Saturnian line, and approximate to it in movement perhaps more closely than any other English metre. For, according to the view which seems to offer the best explanation of the facts, there is no question of feet in the Saturnian rhythm, only of word-

accent; and therefore no modern metrical system of verse prevents a precise parallel to it.

Those who hold that Saturnian lines are to be scanned on principles of quantity arrange them on some metrical system, whether as a series of six trochees (with variations) opening with an anacrusis, or as a combination of iambics and trochees, *i.e.* three iambics and a long syllable followed by three trochees. But the fact is that on quantitative principles they cannot accommodate by any means all the Saturnians which have come down to us to any metrical system without assuming a licence which annihilates the latter. To take one instance, the line

*Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus*

defies their efforts. They must scan the second word of the line *Lucius*. Only the author of a versified abstract of Paley's Evidences formerly current at Cambridge had the hardihood to make '*Tacitus*' rhyme with '*affright us*,' and no more justification can be produced for lengthening the penultimate in the one case than in the other. It is the inability on the part of the upholders of quantitative principles to apply those principles which constitute the strength of the accentual theory, and this theory is supported by the analogy offered by the primitive poetry of other Indo-European nations.

The Saturnian line then was recited on principles of accent, and it would seem that there are three stresses in the first half of the line, *i.e.* the first seven syllables, after which there is a break in the line, and two in the second half, which normally contained six syllables. These stresses coincide with the ordinary accent of the word or group of words.

It may be added that the first word of the line is always a word which is accented on the first syllable, whether (and this fact is in itself an argument for the accentual theory) this syllable is one which later prosody made long or short. For this reason the translation given above would represent the original line more closely if altered so as to run

*Sing me goddess Camēna wily old Ulysses*

It will be noticed that while the first two words or word-

groups are such as are accented on the first syllable, in the rest of the line words or word-groups in which the accent is postponed alternate with words which are accented on the first syllable. The occasional exceptions to this principle of alternation can be explained on special grounds. For the views here expressed I am indebted to Prof. Lindsay, *American Journal of Philology*, pp. 139 and 305.

### III

### COMEDY

THE manifold activity which resulted from the first close contact of Rome with Greek culture gave way in time to specialisation. TITUS MACCIUS PLAUTUS, slightly senior to Ennius, was the first Latin writer who devoted himself to comedy alone. Born about 254 B.C. at Sarsina, in Umbria, he came to Rome, where he occupied himself as an actor or a stage-carpenter.\* With the savings thus acquired he engaged in foreign trade, lost them again, and returned to Rome in poverty. To such straits was he reduced that he was obliged to take service with a baker and work in a flour-mill. While in this position he began to write plays, encouraged, perhaps, thereto by his former connection with the stage and his knowledge of its requirements. By these means he seems to have recovered his position, and continued to write till his death in 184 B.C. Plautus was credited with no fewer than 130 plays. That he wrote so many is unlikely. Gellius accounted for the number by the supposition that they were plays of old poets worked over again by Plautus, while Varro had an idea that the total was swelled by the addition to it of the plays of one

\* The words *in operis artificum scenicorum* are susceptible of either interpretation. Leo seems rightly to prefer the former (*Plaut. Forschungen*, p. 65).

Plautius. It is more probable that after Plautus' death plays by others were announced as "Plautine" \* in order to secure them a favourable reception. The question as to which of them were genuine early engaged the attention of critics. Finally Varro placed in a class by themselves twenty-one which were "held by common consent to belong to Plautus." The number tallies with that of the plays we possess, if we include among them the fragmentary *Vidularia*, and there can be little doubt that these are the plays which were pronounced Plautine by the consensus of antiquity.

These plays were in the main versions of originals by the writers of the New Comedy, Philemon Diphilus and Menander. The world therein portrayed, the world of youthful lovers, confidential slaves, braggart soldiers greedy panders, and witty *ἐραῖποι* reflected, not the life of the Romans of the Hannibalic and Macedonian wars, but that of the Athenians of the time of the Diadochi. Plautus transferred it bodily to the Roman stage. As in the originals, so in the versions the scene was laid at some Greek town, usually Athens. The names of the characters, the coinage, the mythological or historical personages referred to are Greek. The Romans when mentioned are called *barbari*, and the plays are described (not otherwise than a Greek would have described them) as translated into "barbaric" language. In a word, here was comedy in Greek dress (*comedia palliata*).

The reason for this transplantation has already been indicated. It was admiration of Greek attainment and consciousness of inability to originate anything like it. A study of motives, situations, and reflections which occur

\* As a genuine Plautine play, the *Pseudolus*, was announced in its post-Plautine prologue.

in Plautus' plays show that in many cases they have their sources in Greek tragedy, especially that of Euripides, whence they had been taken and adapted by the writers of the New Comedy.\* They were the results of a long development, a continuous tradition, and that Plautus could have extemporised anything so elaborate was out of the question. In particular the achievement of a plot would have been beyond him. It was the production of a "play with a plot" which was the startling novelty of the year 240 B.C. The closely knit plot was the special achievement of the New Comedy, and when the Romans began to write Roman comedies their plots, although they had before them Greek models by which to profit, were comparatively rudimentary.

And yet this frankly Greek presentation of comedy perhaps requires some further explanation. It might have been thought that it would have been more interesting to a Roman audience to see a play presented in Roman form.

In the first place, to Romanise the plays completely would have involved more time and trouble than Plautus was prepared to bestow. In the second place, his Roman public would perhaps have been scandalised if he had done so. They were prepared to be amused by the frivolity of the merry Greeklings, and to admit that as far as the world of entertainment was concerned "they manage these things better in Greece." But they were not yet prepared to see Roman senators and heads of households in situations such as those in which old gentlemen were presented in the *Mercator* or the *Bacchides*. This being so, it is perhaps hardly necessary to assume that the laying of the scene at Athens or some

\* Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*

Greek city and its presentation in Greek dress were definitely due to police regulations.\*

But at the same time Plautus wished his plays to be intelligible and vivid to his audiences. Hence while the setting remained Greek, there was much Romanisation of details, and especially in those departments with which his hearers would be most familiar—military matters (most of them must have seen service), neighbouring localities, law, and slave life. The result of these two conflicting tendencies was to produce a strange confusion. "*Ædiles and *tresviri* jostle *agoranomoi* and *demarchi*. A speaker in a play in which the scene is laid in Ætolia, Ephesus, or Epidamnus will remark that he has just come from the Velabrum or the Capitol.*"† Slaves appear at once as on friendly and confidential terms with their masters and as constantly liable to brutal punishment. The first is a feature of Greek, the latter of Roman society. A somewhat analogous phenomenon is observable in Shakespeare, where he dramatises Plutarch and brings in Theseus in English Court attire of the day. As eager to enter into the great heroic world revealed by Plutarch as were the Roman writers to avail themselves of the finished drama of intrigue and adventure depicted by the writer of the New Comedy, he is above all anxious to make it intelligible, and more than indifferent about archæological accuracy in the presentment of a personage whom, if clothed in *chlamys* and *chiton*, his audience would have found an unfamiliar and enigmatical figure.

The motive we have just been considering doubtless led Plautus to make additions as well as alterations. Such additions may be identified in the passage in the

\* As supposed by Mommsen, *R. H.* II. 429.

† Tyrrell, *Lat. Poetry*, p. 44.

*Curculio*, where the *chōragus* indicates the localities in which various classes of the population of Rome are to be found, or that in the *Stichus* where the parasite Gelasimus adopts a Roman custom \* and holds an auction of his stock-in-trade, while there are not a few voluble altercations which have about them so much more of Italian vinegar (*Italum acetum*) than of Attic salt that it is difficult not to believe that Plautus, with the tradition of Fescennine verse and *satura* behind him, did not originate them.† Nor does the influence of the native comedy end here. The form of humour which consists in wilfully misunderstanding your interlocutor's remarks by interpreting them in their literal sense is common to Plautine comedy and the Atellan play. Horace complains that in his presentment of parasites Plautus resembles the buffoon of the Atellan stage, and it has even been suggested that his name (Maccius) is reminiscent of days when he played the fool (Maccus) in Atellan pieces. Apart from this, in his reproduction of some of his originals Plautus has fused two plays into one, or supplemented one play by the introduction of scenes or an act borrowed from another.

But there was another respect in which he handled them freely, and that was in the metres, and in the corresponding distribution of the play between the parts spoken and the parts delivered in recitative or sung. Menander's plays were written for the most part in iambic senarii,‡ which were intended to be spoken by

\* *Stichus*, 193.

† But this cannot be proved except where Plautus actually makes a Latin pun on a Greek word, as in *Bacchides*, 284-5 (cited by Sellar).

‡ There are passages in trochaic septenarii in the recently discovered Cairo fragments. Still, there is little doubt that iambic



the actor. In Plautus the iambic lines amount only to a quarter of the whole. The bulk of the plays are written in trochaic lines of seven or eight feet, or in eight-footed iambic lines, or in various lyric metres, chiefly bacchiac, cretic, or anapæstic. Only the passages in iambic senarii were spoken. Directly the dialogue took a brisker tone it broke into trochaic or long iambic lines, which were delivered in a kind of recitative,\* with an obbligate accompaniment on the flute, and might be emphasised by rhythmic movements on the part of the actors. As for the passages in lyric metres, these were sung to airs with a full accompaniment on the flute by a performer invisible to the audience, while the actor was sufficiently employed in interpreting the meaning of the song by all the resources of movement and gesture which were comprised under the Latin term *saltatio* (dancing).

As to the origin of these *cantica* there is some doubt. It is not to be supposed that they were an original creation of Plautus. A not improbable view is that they were modelled on music-hall songs (*ἰλαρωδίαί* or *μαγωδίαί*) of a kind which, evolved perhaps out of the monodies in Euripidean plays, were known in Alexandria and subsequently in the Greek cities of Campania and Southern Italy.† In their matter Plautus' *cantica* seem to have been expansions of passages in the Greek originals. The fact of their introduction may have been

senarii largely predominated in Menander, and as far as the distinctively lyric metres are concerned his fragments show only inconsiderable traces of anapæsts

\* Both recitative and songs were technically known as *cantica*, in contradistinction to *deverbia*, the parts in iambic senarii, which were delivered in the ordinary tone of conversation; but the term *canticum* was also applied specially to the songs

† Leo, *Die Plautinische Cantica* (Berlin, 1897)

due to the tradition of the *satura*, which (according to Livy, vii. 2) had since 364 B.C. been provided with music throughout, and contained songs intended for accompaniment on the flute.

However this may be, it will be seen that the Latinised Greek comedies performed in the temporary wooden theatres erected for the purpose at Rome during the sixth century of the city must have been calculated to produce rather a different impression from that given by their prototypes in the Dionysiac theatre of Athens. With all allowance for difference of circumstances, they must have possessed something of the character of modern comic opera.

It remains to classify the plays of Plautus according to their leading motives, and briefly to characterise the most representative among them.

The plots of some turn on mistaken identity. This is the case with the *Amphitruo*, the original of plays by Molière, and Dryden. While Amphitruo is absent on a campaign, Jupiter, in order that he may deceive his wife, Alcmena, assumes the personality of Amphitruo, while Mercury personates his slave, Sosia. The comic element in the play is supplied by the confusions which arise when the real Amphitruo and the real Sosia return. The most effective scene from this point of view is that in which Mercury, wishing to deter Sosia from entering his master's house, asserts that he himself is Sosia and Sosia somebody else. There is abundant humour in the way in which Sosia, overborne by threats and blows, staggered by Mercury's knowledge and his resemblance to himself, and half convinced of the necessity of "getting himself another name," recurs again and again to the conviction that he is the man he always was. In one respect the

*Amphitruo* stands alone among the plays of Plautus. It is introduced in the prologue as a *tragicocomædia*, and consistently with this the substance of the play is drawn from the world of mythology, the chief actors are gods and heroes, and the tone of the close, in which Amphitruo is struck senseless, and on recovering himself is informed that Alcmena has given birth to twins, one of whom is plainly a god, rises above the ordinary tone of comedy. The Greek correlative of *tragicocomædia* is *ἰλαροτραγωδία*, and it is possible that the *Amphitruo* was based on an original by the Sicilian Rhinthon, who is known to have written dramas of this kind. The preponderance of opinion is, however, in favour of the view that the original was by some writer of the New Comedy. One of the editors of the *Amphitruo* (Prof. Palmer) has remarked on the Roman character of the play Sosia's narrative of the campaign against the Teleboæ (cf. ll. 187 and 204) might have come from an early Roman annalist, and the character of Alcmena is that of a true Roman matron (cf. l. 800 ff.).

In the *Amphitruo* the confusion is due to design, in the *Menæchmi* (*The Twin Brothers*) to accident. Twin brothers physically undistinguishable bear the same name, Menæchmus, for after one of them has been lost when seven years old the other is renamed after him. At the time of the action the lost brother is living at Epidamnus. He has been adopted by and made the heir of the merchant into whose possession he had come, and has married a rich wife. The second Menæchmus, who on reaching manhood has set out to find his brother, arrives in the course of a prolonged search at Epidamnus, where the resemblance between them gives rise to a series of complications. The second Menæchmus at first profits by the peccadilloes

of his brother, a man of pleasure, for he is entertained by his brother's mistress. But the situation has its drawbacks, for he offends his brother's parasite through ignorance of his expectations, and when the parasite revenges himself by turning informer he finds himself exposed to the resentment of his brother's wife. She and her father, whom she has summoned with a view to a divorce, find his conduct so strange that they suspect him of being mad, and, giving way to his irritation, he pretends to be mad in order to frighten them. The consequences fall on his brother, for owing to the opportune retirement of the second and the entrance of the first Menæchmus, the latter becomes the subject of the doctor's diagnosis, and is only saved from being carried off to a madhouse by the intervention of his brother's slave, Messenio, who takes him for his master. Not till the two brothers are accidentally confronted does Messenio suspect that the Epidamnian is the long-lost brother, and it is only after some preliminary blunders and by dint of interrogating them separately that he establishes their respective identities.

The *Menæchmi*, which has been imitated by Shakespeare in the *Comedy of Errors*, is the best example and the type of its class. The plot makes some demands on credulity, but is rendered more convincing by the hasty temper common to the brothers, which makes them impatient of explanations.

The device of a mistaken identity is also used in the *Miles Gloriosus*, or *Braggart Soldier*, but here it is caused by one person enacting two parts. The braggart soldier Pyrgopolinices has carried off the girl Philocomasium to Ephesus in the absence of her lover, Pleusicles. By a lucky chance Pleusicles' slave, Palæstrio, starting to inform his master

of what has happened, is captured by pirates and becomes the slave of the same soldier. He communicates with Pleusicles, who comes to Ephesus, and lodges in the adjoining house, which, as it happens, belongs to a friend of his father. In order to facilitate intercourse between the lover and his mistress the party-wall is pierced. Unfortunately, Pyrgopolinices' slave, Sceledrus, descries their endearments from the roof of the soldier's house. To disarm suspicion it is pretended that the lady seen next door is Philocomasium's twin sister, and by an adroit use of the passage Sceledrus is convinced that this fiction is a fact.

But really the *Miles Gloriosus* is best placed in another class, that of character plays. The main object of the play is to exhibit the character of the braggart soldier. This is the purpose of the first act, in which there is a dialogue between Pyrgopolinices (Sacker of Cities) and his parasite Artotrogus (Muncher), who does not appear on the stage again. It is the purpose of the last two acts, in which the soldier's amateness and his conviction that his charms are irresistible are successfully exploited. Indeed, it is likely that the first, the fourth, and the fifth acts represent the original play, ἀλάζων, with which the motive of the pierced wall and the duplicate sister has been somewhat unskilfully combined.\* For in fact it makes the two final acts unnecessary. As far as rescuing Philocomasium is concerned, this might have been effected after the second act, in which freedom of intercourse has been secured and the soldier's slave, Sceledrus, got out of the way. But the invention in the two final acts depends for its motive on the supposition that escape is impossible without the consent of the soldier himself. Accordingly he

\* Leo, *Plaut. Forschungen*.

is deluded with the belief that the wife of his neighbour Periplectomenos, Pleusicles' father's friend, has fallen deeply in love with him. He is led to believe that she is divorced and that the house is hers. He becomes eager to get Philocomasium out of the way at all costs. He loads her with gifts and makes her a present of his slave Palæstrio. Disguised as a sailor, her lover Pleusicles takes her away to the ship where her mother and twin sister await her. Pyrgopolinices then proceeds to the neighbouring house, where, instead of a love-lorn matron, he finds Periplectomenos ready to receive him. He is soundly beaten, and thinks himself lucky to get off without the punishment inflicted on adulterers. Gladly would he have recovered his mistress, but he learns too late that she has already departed, and that her companion is his rival in disguise. Loosely constructed, the play is full of rollicking fun. The treatment of Pyrgopolinices recalls the treatment of Falstaff in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The best, however, of the character plays is the *Aulularia*. It presents the picture of a miser,\* Euclio, and centres round a pot of money (hence its title, *The Play of the Little Pot*) which he jealously guards, and of which he is eventually robbed. The character of the miser is drawn with rather coarse touches, and with an exaggeration somewhat in the manner of Dickens. He is so stingy that he saves the parings of his nails, and regrets his tears because of the waste of water which they involve. There is a humorous scene exhibiting the misunderstandings of Euclio and Lyconides, the young man of the piece. The latter is trying, with some natural diffidence, to confess that he has seduced Euclio's daughter. The other persists in believing that he has committed the

\* Molière's *l'Avare* is modelled upon it

his daughter, my dearest

more heinous offence of stealing his pot. It is likely that the original of the *Truculentus* (*The Boor*) was a character play exhibiting the transformation of a rough countryman into a town rascal. But in the Plautine reproduction, which represents it probably in a much-curtailed form, the slave who enacts the title-rôle plays quite a subordinate part, and the sudden change of character which is shown in the second of the two scenes in which he appears has no sufficient explanation. The play is mainly occupied with the unsuccessful attempt of an *ἐραῖρα* to exploit three lovers simultaneously. Although mentioned by Cicero along with the *Pseudolus* as a favourite with the author it is one of the least pleasing of his comedies.

A considerable number of plays turn on the motive of recognition (*ἀναγνώρισις*), which generally takes the form of the discovery that girls in the position of *ἐραῖραι* are long-lost children of free birth. This is the case in the *Rudens*, the *Cistellaria*, and the fragmentary *Vidularia*. In each case the title of the play has reference to the *pièces d'identification*. The *Rudens* is so called after the rope by which the box containing the trinkets which establish the identity of the heroine is drawn ashore. The *Cistellaria* is the play of the chest, the *Vidularia* the play of the wallet, containing objects which serve a similar purpose. Of the two plays which survive the *Rudens* is decidedly the better. It is based on a play by Diphilus perhaps called *πῆρα*. It has been noted that *ἀναγνώρισις* is a motive in each of the three plays by Diphilus, and in none of the three by Philemon, reproduced by Plautus. That it was a favourite motive with Menander is shown by the plays of Terence. In the *Rudens* a pander, Labrax, sets sail from Athens to Sicily, taking with him the heroine and another girl, in order to

pursue his trade there, although the former has already been contracted to a young man at Athens for thirty minæ. The ship is wrecked on the coast of Cyrene, and the heroine comes to the house of one Dæmones, whose daughter she is discovered to be. The *Rudens*, which is better in its separate scenes than in the working out of the whole, is redolent of the sea. The prologue is spoken by the constellation Arcturus. The escape of the castaways, which is supposed to be seen from the stage, is graphically described, and a feature of the play is a chorus of fishermen, who sing a *canticum* descriptive of the hardships of their life. Recognition is the leading motive in the *Pænulus*, in which an original *Καρχηδόμος* has been combined with another play. Hanno, a Carthaginian, discovers at Calydon two long-lost daughters, and a nephew who is the lover of one of them. In the *Casina*, *Captivi*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Persa*, and *Pænulus* the motive of recognition plays a part in the *denouement*, but in their main plot these are plays of intrigue.

Three plays, the *Captivi*, *Trinummus*, and *Stichus*, are distinguished from the rest by the fact that no *ἑταῖραι* appear in them. In the first of these there are no female characters at all, and in the second none appear upon the stage.

The *Captivi*, according to Lessing the best play ever put upon the stage, has at any rate a strong claim to be considered the best that Plautus wrote. The plot, which consists in an intrigue and a recognition, is well knit and well carried out. The motive of the play is the devotion of a slave to his master, and its tendency, as the author has observed in two passages (ll. 54 and 1030), is edifying. Except in one scene, the movement is sedate. The tone is grave, even tragic where Tyndarus admits his offence



and faces his punishment. A lighter element is supplied by Tyndarus' wit—for he can be witty too—and the buffoonery of the parasite Ergasilus.

Hegio, an Ætolian, has lost two sons, one of them long ago when only four years old, the other (Philopolemus) recently. He has been captured in a war with the Eleans which is still going on. To recover him Hegio buys Elean captives, among them Philocrates and his slave Tyndarus. In order that his master may escape, Tyndarus pretends to be Philocrates, and the latter is sent home to arrange for an exchange. Unfortunately for Tyndarus, another captive from Elis, Aristophontes, appears upon the scene. The supposed Philocrates is identified by Aristophontes as Tyndarus, and is sent by Hegio to work in the quarries. Just at the right moment, however, Philocrates returns, bringing with him Philopolemus, and also Stalagmus, a runaway slave of Hegio's, who had sold Tyndarus when a child to Philocrates' father. All is rectified. Tyndarus is restored to father and brother, and Stalagmus is punished instead of him.

The *Trinummus* is a play of domestic life. Charmides, leaving Athens, entrusts his children, a spendthrift son, Lesbonicus, and a daughter, to his friend Callicles. The play shows how faithfully, despite appearances, Callicles performs his duty. Amongst the characters are a faithful slave, Stasimus, who desires his master's return, a disinterested lover, who is eager to wed Charmides' daughter without a dowry, and a trusty friend, Megaronides, who devises the guileless plot whereby an arrangement so derogatory to the credit of the family may be avoided. The only dubious character is the sycophant who is commissioned by Callicles to carry out this plot, and the

only comical situation that in which Charmides, unexpectedly returning from his voyage, meets and questions his *son-disant* representative about himself. The actors are rather lavish of good advice, but the play is not at all dull.

Less important is the *Stichus*. It presents a picture of conjugal fidelity. A father urges his two daughters, whose husbands have long been absent, to marry again. They refuse, and opportunely the husbands return. The play is described in the prologue as based on "the Brothers" of Menander; but this cannot be the same play which was used by Terence. The original seems to have been cut down and modified by Plautus, for the *Stichus* is short, and the development of the plot ceases with the arrival of the husbands. Further, the play ends, not in the family party anticipated in a preceding passage, but (like the *Persa*) in a scene of revelry below stairs.

If the productions of Plautus are to be divided into plays pleasant and plays unpleasant, in the latter category must be placed the *Casina* and the *Mercator*. In each a father and a son appear as rivals in love. In the *Casina* the two agents of the rivals cast lots (whence the title *κληρούμενοι* given by Diphilus to the original) in order to decide which of the patrons is to secure the girl they both admire. That of the father is successful. His wife, however, thwarts him by disguising a man as the girl of Casos. The latter is found to be a freeborn citizen, and is married to the son. In the *Mercator* father and son make successive attempts to deceive each other. The father has the advantage; he buys the girl (hence the title, *The Merchant*, corresponding to *ἐμπορος*, which was that of the original by Philemon). But as in the *Casina* it is the jealousy of his wife which frustrates his plan and results in the success of the son.

The remainder of the plays are best characterised as comedies of intrigue. Plots devised by slaves to provide money for their young masters' love-affairs furnish the arguments, and in most of them a slave plays the leading part. The true examples of this class are the *Pseudolus* (*The Cheat*), the *Bacchides* (based on the *δις ἑξαπατῶν*, or *Double Deceiver*, of Menander), and the *Mostellaria*. Pseudolus in the first, Chrysalus in the second, Tranio in the last are the best examples of the intriguing slave. How resourceful they are, and how supremely confident! Pseudolus, bidden to procure twenty minæ for the purchase of the mistress of his young master, Calidorus, compares himself with a poet who, tablets in hand, sets himself to find in his brain something that nowhere exists and finds it, and promises himself a like success in improvising the equally non-existent minæ. Fortune is kinder to Pseudolus than he has a right to expect, for having wagered Calidorus' father, Simo, twenty minæ that he will find the money, he goes out, and forthwith meets the messenger of Calidorus' rival, a soldier, who has already paid fifteen of the twenty minæ required. Promptly personating the head servant of the pander Ballio, who has possession of the girl, he induces the messenger to transfer to him the token which shows that he is the bearer of the balance. Calidorus' friend Charinus lends him five minæ, and a slave whom he disguises as the messenger. Ballio is duly taken in, and Simo loses his bet. But Chrysalus in the *Bacchides* is called upon to exercise greater ingenuity and perseverance. By a graphic and circumstantial but wholly fictitious tale he secures from the father of young Mnesilochus the sum required by the son to purchase one of two sisters, Bacchis. But no sooner is the sum in his hands than Mnesilochus surrenders it to his father in

disgust at the supposed infidelity of his mistress, whom he has mistaken for her twin sister, the mistress of his friend Pistoclerus. So the money has to be got over again, and this time from one whose suspicions have been fully aroused. Hopeless as the task might seem to be, Chrysalus is successful, and in the final scene the two fathers set out together to rescue their respective sons from the witty sisters, only to fall victims themselves.

Tranio in the *Mostellaria* (or *Ghost Play*; the prototype was Diphilus' *φάσμα*) is less confidently calculating than Chrysalus, but by a succession of cheerful inventions manages for a time to keep difficulties at bay. In the absence of his father, Theopropides, the young Philolaches, abetted by his slave, Tranio, enjoys himself with his friend Callidamates and his mistress Philematium. The news of Theopropides' return is a thunderclap. The young people are quite unable to deal with the situation. Philolaches is in despair and Callidamates drunk. Tranio takes charge. The house is to be shut up that the revel may continue. When Theopropides arrives he is kept away from the house by the story that its only occupant is a ghost. A moneylender appears demanding the interest on a sum borrowed by Philolaches to free his mistress Philematium. Tranio induces Theopropides to pay it by representing that it is the earnest-money due on a house which his son has bought instead of the haunted one. When Theopropides desires to inspect the new purchase Tranio induces Simo, the owner of the neighbouring house, to allow his master to inspect this by a tale that he is going to enlarge his own, in view of Philolaches' approaching marriage, and would like to take Simo's as a model. These inventions are speedily exposed. The slaves who come to meet

Callidamates tell Theopropides that the house is still occupied, and Simo protests that he has never sold his house. But the situation is saved by Callidamates, a very sorry *deus ex machina*, who, awakened at last from his drunken sleep, undertakes to pay all damages.

The *Epidicus*, mentioned above among those in which the motive of a recognition is used, is essentially a comedy of intrigue, for though it concludes with a recognition this is only effected at the end of the play, and serves merely to save from punishment the slave whose two unsuccessful plots form the subject of the action. The *Epidicus* was a favourite with Plautus, perhaps because there is no padding in it.\* It contains neither digressions nor descriptive scenes, and the situations follow one another thick and fast. On the other hand, it is not surprising that it was not a great success—and that it was not may be inferred from the fact that the author declares that he disliked it as acted by Pellio—for the plot is complicated and the treatment meagre, while it contains no very attractive characters, Epidicus, the slave who plays the title rôle, being an impudent trickster.

The *Asinaria* and the *Persa* exhibit the play of intrigue at a lower level, for the former (based on the *ᾠδαίος* of Demophilus, a playwright otherwise unknown) is a broad farce varied by sentimental episodes, while the latter is concerned with a humbler social stratum, the lover being a slave who is assisted by a fellow slave and a parasite to prosecute his amours during the absence of his master, and the comedy is low like the society.

The plays of Plautus, drawn as they are from at least three, and probably more, of the writers of the New Comedy, and comprising pieces so different as the *Amphi-*

\* *Bacchides*, 214.

*truo* and the *Asinaria*, the *Captivi* and the *Bacchides*, offer considerable variety. Yet, like the New Comedy generally, they deal with but a small part of human life, and that a frivolous one. But it must be remembered that they were written to amuse, and their great merit is that they succeeded, and to a certain extent do still succeed, in their object. It is true that the ribaldry and abuse, the threatening and the punishment of slaves, above all the eternal trickery, pall on the modern reader. But Plautus' presentment of the New Comedy is carried out with such geniality, such inexhaustible spirits and good-humour, that we cannot be surprised that his plays were the favourite reading of Luther, and that St. Jerome went to sleep with them under his pillow. When Sosa in the *Amphitruo*, browbeaten and bemused by Mercury, who has assumed his personality, asks himself in bewilderment, "Am I not standing in front of our house, and haven't I a lantern in my hand?" and reluctantly decides to "get himself another name"; when the doctor in the *Menæchmi* called in to advise about one of the brothers, who in irritation at the misunderstandings in which he is involved has assumed the madness with which he had been credited, and confronted, as of course happens, with the wrong brother, cautiously asks fatuous questions, such as "Do you drink white wine or dark?" and the other in extreme annoyance suggests that he had better ask him whether he eats "purple bread or scarlet bread or saffron-yellow bread"; when the braggart soldier of the *Pænulus* in a fine vein of romance recounts how the "flying men" were brought down "thick as pears" by means of balls of bird-lime thrown from slings; when the parasite in the *Stichus* holds an auction of his stock-in-trade and offers for sale a variety of enticing wares, including "a parasite--

empty, handy for storing scraps in," one feels that there is here, not, indeed, matter for inextinguishable laughter, but at any rate excellent fooling.\*

The point in which Varro rightly assigns him the pre-eminence is dialogue.

In the construction of his pieces he is occasionally at fault, doubtless through haste in writing. Horace's criticism that Plautus "hurries across the stage in slippers down at heel" † is justified if it is restricted to plays in which he has resorted to combination or curtailment, though contradictions and redundancies are perhaps not confined to these.

Horace's other complaint, ‡ namely, that Plautus has coarsened the characterisation of his originals—for he means this, and not that the characters are inconsistent with themselves, when he bids the reader observe how ill Plautus maintains the parts of youthful lover, stingy father, or crafty pander—has some truth in it, but is not quite fair. It was Plautus' deliberate intention to give his characters an exaggerated and farcical aspect. That this was his purpose is indicated by his substituting for the original names of the characters comic compounds formed (and, as is intelligible enough, not always correctly formed) on the model of names in the old comedy. And this heightening of the colours is connected with that Italianisation of some of Plautus' characters referred to above which was perhaps necessary to make them live in their new environment. It is significant that Horace complains that in his presentment of his greedy parasites Plautus recalls the buffoon in an Atellan play.

\* These instances are given by J. W. Duff, *A Literary History of Rome*

† *Hor. Fpp* II. 1 174.

‡ *Ibid.* 171.

For metre Plautus had remarkable aptitude. He shows great skill in handling various lyric metres in his songs (*cantica*). This is so at any rate with the bacchiacs, mostly employed where the tone is sedate and meditative, and cretics, used in lively narrative and description. With anapæsts, used to express haste and excitement, he is less successful. Plautus allowed himself considerable liberty in the substitution of two short syllables for a long one, but the character of the metre is always maintained by the normality of the final foot. Horace's\* opinion that an earlier generation had been too lenient to Plautus' numbers as well as to his jokes must be discounted in the light of Cicero's remark† that the iambic lines of the comic writers were so little removed from prose that metre was hardly discernible in them. In a century and a half the increased attention to quantity introduced by Ennius had caused the freer system, under which the ordinary pronunciation of words had a large influence in scansion, to be so far forgotten as to be scarcely understood.

Plautus' language is all his own. To those who recall it, popular, copious to redundancy, emphasised occasionally by alliteration and at rare intervals even by rhyme, rich in grotesque compounds and comic formations, the remark of Ælius Stilo, that the Muses, had they chosen to speak in Latin, would have spoken in the language of Plautus, may appear a little quaint. But in so far as it is a testimony to the raciness of the Latin it is justified. It is, indeed, remarkable how free from Græcisms the language of these early reproducers of Greek works is. This is perhaps to be accounted for by the fact that they regarded the matter rather than the manner of their

\* A. P. 270.

† Orator § 184



originals. They thought they could make Greek literature their own by turning it into Latin. It was left to the more conscientious students of Augustan times so to absorb the style and feeling of the Greek that their own language was coloured and modified thereby.

Midway between Plautus and Terence in date (219-168 B.C.), and to some extent in style, comes CÆCILIUS STATIUS. At any rate as far as concerned the structure of his originals he treated them with more respect than Plautus had done. He seems to have chosen good plays to work upon (sixteen out of forty of the titles\* of his plays correspond to Menandrian titles), and not to have modified them by combination with other plays; and this probably is the significance of the fact that Varro assigns him the palm in the matter of plots.† But putting the plots aside, the three passages from Cæcilius' *Plocium* (*The Necklace*) quoted by Gellius‡ side by side with the original passages of Menander's play in order to illustrate the inferiority of the Latin playwright show that he did not translate at all closely. A monologue in iambs he reproduces as a lyric song, in a dialogue while altering the metre he inserts some farcical matter,§ and of a soliloquy by a slave he retains only a few scraps, to which he gives a tone more turgid and tragic than the original had possessed. The last circumstance may supply the key to the view current in Horace's time that Cæcilius excelled in "weight" or "emphasis."||

\* We have only the titles, which are mostly Greek, and fragments inconsiderable except for the passage preserved by Gellius

† *Nomus*, 1 p 610, LM: *in argumentis poscit palmam.* ‡ 2, 23.

§ *Nescio quæ mimica* [so Leo for *mimica*] *incolcavit* (Gellius, l.c.) See Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.* 90.

|| Hor. *Ep.* II 1. 59: *dicitur vincere Cæcilius gravitate.* Terence was censured for *scriptura levis* (*Eunuchus*, 5)

And we may imagine that sentiments like

*That man's a fool or ignorant of life  
Who holds not Love the greatest of the gods,\**

OR

*Full oft dwells Wisdom 'neath a shabby coat.†*

did not go unapplauded.

But although Volcatius Sedigitus, a critic who lived about 130 B.C., puts Cæcilius actually at the head of his list of comic writers arranged in order of merit, Mommsen is more than likely to be right in surmising that Cæcilius was popular with the critics "simply because he was more regular than Plautus, more vigorous than Terence; notwithstanding which he may very well have been far inferior to both." In one point, language, this was certainly the case. Cicero says expressly that he was a bad authority on Latinity. Nor is this surprising, for he was no Italian, but an Insubrian Gaul brought to Rome as a slave, like Livius before and Terence after him, when his nation was conquered in 200 B.C., and he owed his family name to the Roman in whose service he found himself.

It is a greater marvel that in this very matter a similar disability was no bar to the conspicuous excellence of his successor.

For, like Cæcilius, TERENCE was a foreigner. Born at Carthage (probably in 195 B.C.‡), and a member of one

\* Cic *Tusc Disp.* iv. 32, 68

† *Ibid.* iii 23

‡ Suetonius (*Vita Terentii*, in the fragments of *De Viris Illustribus*) says that Terence was in his twenty-fifth year when he went to Greece, 160 B.C., where he died in the following year, 159 B.C. Nepos, quoted by Terence (*ibid*), calls him the *aqualis* of Scipio and Lælius. This would make the date of his birth 185 B.C. But (1) there is the difficulty of supposing that he produced a play showing so much experience as the *Andria* at nineteen, (2) *aqualis* need not mean more than contemporary; (3) Fenestella says expressly

of the subject African nationalities,\* he was brought to Rome, not, like Cæcilius, as a captive, for Rome was not at war with Carthage at the time, but in the ordinary course of the slave trade.

And yet a partial explanation of what is characteristic in Terence is to be found in his circumstances and the time at which he wrote. His talents and good looks induced Terentius Lucanus, the Roman senator in whose service he found himself, to give him a first-rate education, and when in no long time he received his freedom the same gifts secured him the *entrée* to the most cultivated society in Rome.

By this time the ardour of the first impulse to imitate Greek literature was spent. A closer acquaintance with Greek masterpieces had brought the conviction that the conquest of the realm of Greek letters was no such easy matter as had at first appeared. The growth of this conviction was indicated by the closer adherence of Cæcilius to his models. Nowhere was it stronger than in that quarter where appreciation of Greek literature was most keen—that is to say, in the group of statesmen and men of letters which centred round Scipio Æmilianus. There was no inclination here for such slapdash reproduction of Greek comedy as that of Plautus, or such ambitious and sanguine attempts to rewrite Homer as had been made by Ennius. The tendency was towards closer study, more artistic imitation on more modest lines, towards correctness, especially in language, and towards he was older than Scipio and Lælius, (4) he refers to his critics as *adulescentuli* (*H. T.* 51), (5) *trigesimum* is found for *vigesimum* in some MSS—only, it is true, as a correction. Still, on the whole the earlier date is the more probable

\* This has been inferred from his being called Afer, not Pœnus or Pœnulus.

the improvement and refinement of Latin, a subject to which, as will be seen, one of the circle, Lucilius, gave special attention.

This was the society in which Terence moved, in which he found his literary aspirations, and the approval of which he had in view.

The allegation made by an unfriendly critic that he "took to writing all of a sudden" was, as he intimates in the prologue to *The Self-tormentor* (*Heauton Timoroumenos*, 23 ff.), one that might safely be left to the judgment of his audience.\* But the fact that it could be made, and the story (if true) that when Terence won the astonished admiration of the veteran Cæcilius by reading him his first play (*The Girl from Andros*) he came before him as a complete stranger, show that he had studied apart, that, for instance, he had kept aloof from the guild of poets, and that he was not generally known till his plays began to be acted.

The first of these (*The Girl from Andros*) was put on the stage in 166 B.C., and between that date and 160 B.C. inclusive it was followed by five others.†

The plot of the *Andria* is as follows :

Simo has arranged a marriage between his son Pamphilus and Philumena, the daughter of his friend Chremes. But the latter, in consequence of rumours that Pamphilus has formed another attachment, draws back. These rumours are but too well founded. Pamphilus is, in fact, expecting that Glycerium, a girl from Andros, will

\* *Iudicium vestrum, vostra existimatio*  
*Valebit.*

H. T. 25

† *Andria*, 166 B.C. ; *Hecyra*, first performance 165 B.C. ; *Heauton Timoroumenos*, 163 B.C. , *Eunuchus* and *Phormio*, 161 B.C. ; *Adelphoe*, and second and third performances of the *Hecyra*, 160 B.C.

bear him a child, which he has promised to acknowledge. At the opening of the play Simo announces that the marriage is going to take place after all. His object in making this announcement is to bring matters to a head. Should Pamphilus refuse he will be justified in punishing him for open contumacy ; should he consent he will have a ground for approaching Chremes again. Pamphilus is in despair, and so is his friend Charinus, for he is as anxious to marry Philumena as Pamphilus is reluctant to do so. The slave Davus, knowing that Simo has made the announcement without consulting Chremes, advises his young master to disarm suspicion by a consent which will cost him nothing. So far well. But Simo actually induces Chremes to assent to the marriage. Davus is assailed with recriminations by both Pamphilus and Charinus. Thereupon he plays another card. He puts the child now born to Glycerium in Chremes' way, and makes Glycerium's maid reveal in his hearing that it is Pamphilus' child. This stops the marriage. Chremes will have no more of it. Simo is furious, and punishes Davus. At this moment arrives Crito, cousin of Chrysis, lately deceased, with whom during her lifetime Glycerium had lived, to claim her property as her heir. From his explanations (to which Simo's suspicions will hardly allow him to listen) it appears that Glycerium is Chremes' long-lost daughter Pasiphila, wrecked on Andros as an infant, with her uncle, Chremes' brother, befriended by Chrysis, and brought by her to Athens, where, however, she had never been able to find her parents. Thus all ends well. Pamphilus is allowed to marry Glycerium, and it is indicated that Charinus will marry the daughter who had been destined for Pamphilus.

In the *Andria* the interest is maintained throughout,

the characterisation is excellent, and the play is not wanting in humour, though this often appears more in the situation than in the words spoken. There is humour in the profound gloom due to precisely contrasted sentiments and points of view in which Pamphilus and Charinus are alike plunged by the threatened marriage of the former to Philumena (l. 321). Simo, who is throughout bent upon the marriage, is so suspicious of intrigues designed to prevent it that even when (to Davus' dismay) he is all but witness to the birth of Pamphilus' child he is convinced (to the slave's corresponding relief) that the whole thing is a put-up job (l. 471). The same pre-occupation is displayed when he exclaims that Crito "can't be an honest man, or he would not have appeared just on the day of the wedding, and never before" (l. 915).

A very different play is the *Hecyra*, produced in the following year, 165 B.C. Pamphilus has broken with an *êralpa*, Bacchis, and married a wife, Philumena. In time he has begun to care for her; but during a temporary absence of his she leaves her home and returns to her own people. This proceeding causes distress in both households, especially to the mother-in-law, Sostrata, who is accused by her husband, Laches, of having caused the trouble by her harshness. Pamphilus returns, and his wife gives birth to a son as the result of some pre-nuptial union. He will not take her back, but out of consideration for her mother he does not divulge the true reason for his refusal. The only pretext he can avow is that his wife cannot get on with her mother-in-law, Sostrata, and that he sides with his mother. This exposes Sostrata to more suspicion and abuse; it also exposes Pamphilus himself to the suspicions of his father, who believes that he is still attached to Bacchis. Bacchis is

appealed to, and declares that this is not so, and it so happens that her appearance clears the situation. On her hand Philumena's mother recognises a ring once the property of her daughter. It had been given to Bacchis by Pamphilus, who had taken it from an unknown girl with whom he had a nocturnal adventure. With this girl Philumena was now identified, and Pamphilus is thereby enabled to recognise the child, and take his wife back without misgiving.

The *Hecyra*, or *Mother-in-law*, might be called *Misunderstood*, for the mother-in-law of the heroine is the special victim of a series of painful misunderstandings, to which sundry innocent, or comparatively innocent, persons, Sostrata herself, her daughter-in-law, Philumena, Philumena's husband, Pamphilus, are the victims—misunderstandings only removed by the interposition of an *ἐραίπα*, and a chance discovery consequent on her appearance which effects the *dénouement*. The play twice proved a failure, owing, as the author explains in prologues spoken at the second and third performances, to the superior attractions exercised on a stupid public by rope-dancers and gladiators. Whether the special appeal for a favourable hearing made by the actor-manager, Ambivius Turpio, on the third occasion secured ultimate success we do not know. For its failure we need not account with Mommsen by supposing that the audience was scandalised by the appearance of an *ἐραίπα* in the character of *dea ex machina*—indeed, at the first two performances it does not appear that the audience had patience to wait for the *dénouement*. Our sympathy is, indeed, enlisted for the characters wrongly suspected, and Bacchis plays a generous part; but the play as a whole is not merely wanting in gaiety—it is hardly a

comedy at all. The only humorous touch in it is that the slave Parmeno, who is inconveniently inquisitive throughout and has constantly to be got out of the way, is the means of bringing Pamphilus the good news of the solution of the mystery, but never knows what it is, though he is dying to be told.

The titles of Terence's plays do not as a rule give the key to their contents, and the *Heauton Timoroumenos*, or *Self-tormentor*, performed in 163 B.C., might be more explicitly described as a play on the text "Mind your own business." It is in effect a satire on the misapplication of the fine sentiment by which Chremes justifies his interference in his neighbour's business :

*I am a man, mankind's affairs are mine*, [77]\*

The observation which the turn of events gives Menedemus the right to make is :

*How monstrous to be lavish of advice,  
Wise for your neighbour, for yourself a fool!* [922-3]

It is true there is a self-tormentor in the piece, Menedemus, who, full of remorse at the harshness which, as he believes, has driven his son Clinia into exile, punishes himself by living a life of excessive hardship. But the play turns on the fiasco made by Chremes in his attempt to direct his neighbour's affairs. He instructs Menedemus on the right way to treat sons. He tells him he should be more indulgent, even allowing himself to be cheated in order to give them a little pleasure. He goes so far as to suggest to his own slave, Syrus, the ally of his son Clitpho, that as Menedemus' slave is not sufficiently resourceful he should himself help Clinia to play some trick on Menedemus. He does not know that Syrus has anticipated his advice at the expense of his own master.

*' homo sum • humani nihil a me alienum puto*



In the sequel he connives at the amours of his neighbour's son, only to discover that he has been unwittingly promoting those of his own. Forthwith he becomes the severe father, threatens to disinherit Clitpho, and is only pacified by his consenting to marry a lady of his parent's choice.

The *Heauton Timoroumenos*, which is based on a single original by Menander, is announced in the prologue as a quiet play (*stataria*), commending itself to the actor Ambivius Turpio, who took the title rôle, on this account. Accordingly we find that the self-tormentor speaks in iambic senarii throughout, except in a short passage at the opening of the fifth act, where, in his exaltation at his discovery that Chremes is an even greater fool than he is, he breaks into trochaic septenarii. The play is full of Menandrian irony, and the contrast between Bacchis, the expensive mistress of Clitpho, and the modest Antiphila, beloved by Clinia, and discovered to be a daughter of Chremes, is effective; but the course of Syrus' intrigue is a little confused.

The year 161 B.C. marks the culminating point of Terence's production, for it saw the performance of the *Eunuchus* and the *Phormio*, the latter by no means the worst, the former perhaps the best, and certainly the most successful of his plays. We are told that it was performed twice in the same day, and that the author received for it the exceptional amount of 8000 sesterces (£82). The action throughout is in the hands of the young folk; the father of Phædria and Chærea appears only to express his formal acquiescence in their proceedings, incidentally betraying a very inadequate acquaintance with the attainments of the latter (cf. l. 986 with l. 296). Chærea, the disturbing element in the plans so carefully laid by Thais for the restoration of her foster sister to

parents and position, supplies the dynamic force in the play. Only sixteen, and already a port official, leader of a convivial set, and a connoisseur of female beauty, he is full of energy and enterprise. Without hesitation he adopts and acts upon the hardly serious suggestion of Parmeno as to the method by which he might secure the fulfilment of his wishes. When the opportunity comes he is equal to it; nor does his *aplomb* desert him when he is kept wandering about the town in his most incongruous disguise. He is still ready to propitiate the justly incensed Thais by his tactful and genial address. The characters of parasite and braggart soldier from Menander's *Colax* have been skilfully incorporated with the *Eunuchus* by the same author, and the scene (771 ff.) in which the soldier advances to storm Thais' house, Simalio on the left wing, Syrus on the right, the cook, armed with a broom, in the centre, and he himself (like Pyrrhus, he explains, the better to direct operations) in the rear, is admirable burlesque. Excellent, too, among the minor characters is Thais' maid, the little spitfire Pythias, flying out at Chærea, determined to be even with Parmeno, and intimidating him, by her hints of the horrible tortures to be inflicted on his young master, into a wholly uncalled-for confession of guilt.

The *Phormio* (*The Parasite*) is a play of intrigue. If wanting in the distinction of the *Andria* or the *Adelphoe*, it is recommended by a clever plot and some lively scenes.

Two young cousins (Antipho and Phædria), left, during the absence of their respective fathers, Demipho and Chremes, in charge of the slave Geta, get into difficulties. Antipho falls in love with a penniless Athenian citizen (Phanium), Phædria with a harp-player (Pamphila). The parasite (Phormio) comes to their aid. By preparing a

suit against Antipho, whom he alleges to be next-of-kin to Phanium, and therefore bound to marry her—a suit which Antipho purposely leaves undefended—he supplies him with the best of reasons for marrying her without a dowry, which otherwise he would not have ventured to do. Later, when Antipho's father has returned home, and is furious at the marriage, and simultaneously there is immediate necessity for thirty minæ to purchase Phædria's harp-player, Phormio utilises the situation he has created by undertaking, for the sum required, to take over Antipho's wife himself. Of course this plan sacrifices Antipho's interests to Phædria's, but something may turn up. It does. Chremes, who has also now returned, discovers that the girl whom Antipho has married is his own daughter by a wife whom, unknown to his Athenian wife, Nausistrata, he has kept at Lemnos, which daughter it had been his secret purpose to provide for by getting her married to Antipho. This discovery, through the eavesdropping of Geta (872), comes to the knowledge of the plotters. So when the brothers Demipho and Chremes, who are in each other's confidence, and no longer desue to upset the marriage, try to recover the thirty minæ, Phormio reveals the truth to Nausistrata. The scene is one of a few which refute the contention that Terence was lacking in comic power. The two old gentlemen struggle desperately to prevent Phormio from coming within earshot of Nausistrata. Oblivious of the urbanity usually characteristic of the Menandrian father, they encourage each other with cries of "Stop his dirty mouth!" "Punch him in the belly!" In vain. The tale is told, and Chremes collapses. Thereafter Phormio pleasantly refers to him as a corpse, and when he so far recovers animation as to exclaim at the parasite's revela-

tion of the purpose for which the thirty minæ had been acquired, Nausistrata silences him at once with "What ! Shocked at a young man like that having one mistress, and you with two wives ?"

In the *Adelphoe* the interest is educational and ethical as much as dramatic. Two brothers, Ctesipho and Æschinus, are brought up, the former by his father, Demea, a strict and narrow-minded countryman, on a system of repression, the latter by his uncle Micio, Demea's brother, an easy-going town-dwelling bachelor, on principles of indulgence and mutual confidence.\* Which system is the better ? To this no decided answer is given. *Both* young men get entangled in love-affairs. Æschinus, unknown to his uncle, has wronged an Athenian citizen, whom he has promised to marry. Ctesipho has fallen in love with a harp-player, whom Æschinus has abducted from her owner for his brother's benefit. So much for systems. However, the presumption is so far in favour of Micio's method that Æschinus is a more attractive character than Ctesipho, and if his uncle's methods have not secured outspokenness on his part they at any rate gain his gratitude when his offence is condoned (700). Till the final act Demea is the butt of the piece. He persists in believing that Æschinus, hopelessly mismanaged by his brother, is *capable de tout*, and that Ctesipho is a paragon of virtue. Disillusioned at last, he is for the moment overwhelmed. Here the play might have ended with the victory of Micio's system. But the sequel is a surprise. Demea suddenly decides that he will be as indulgent and as popular as Micio. He

\* *Pudore et liberalitate liberos  
Retinere satius esse credo quam metu.*

*Ad. 32.*

succeeds to admiration by indiscriminate generosity—at Micio's expense. In the exuberance of his geniality he insists that Micio shall espouse the elderly mother of Æschinus' bride, provide a farm for her poor relation, and free his slave Syrus and his consort. He then declares that the motive of his changed behaviour is simply to expose the baselessness of Micio's popularity, and gains from Æschinus the admission that he is the more trustworthy master of the two. The conclusion of the *Adelphoe* has a certain resemblance to that of the *Heauton Timoroumenos*. In each disillusion is followed by a change of demeanour. But in the *Heauton Timoroumenos* this change is the result of a natural reaction, and is justified by the truth that it is far easier to be philosophical about our neighbours' affairs than our own. In the *Adelphoe* it is assumed for a deliberate purpose. The final scene hardly commends itself, for it involves something less than justice to the kindly bachelor; but it provides a farcical conclusion to the piece—to have left Demea apostrophising "earth and sky and Neptune's seas" would have been far too tragic—and by showing that there are limits to complaisance serves to enforce the dramatist's favourite principle of *ne quid nimis*. It is not intended to reverse the presumption established in favour of a more sympathetic treatment of youth.

In their general character Terence's plays are broadly differentiated from those of Plautus. They are less varied. This is intelligible, for they are drawn from a less extensive range of sources. With the exception of the *Hecyra* and the *Phormio*, of which the originals were by Apollodorus of Carystus, they are all based on plays by Menander. Consistently with this, there is a certain

monotony in the plots. The motive of recognition, a favourite one with Menander, is used in every play except the *Adelphoe*. In four of the plays there is a pair of lovers of whom one marries an Athenian citizen while the other retains his mistress. The *Andria* ends with a double wedding in prospect. In the *Hecyra* Pamphilus recovers his bride. Again Terence's plays are less comic than those of Plautus. They have not the rollicking fun nor the broadly farcical character of the Plautine comedies; in fact, the element of burlesque and extravaganza is almost banished. Their humour is essentially quiet. This is what Cæsar meant when he deplored in Terence the absence of comic force. The society represented in them is, on the whole, the same as that depicted by Plautus, though Terence never moves exclusively in the slave world, as Plautus does in the *Persa* and part of the *Stichus*. The morality is not better. Fathers are still deceived and maidens wronged. Pleasure, not of the most exalted kind, is still recognised as the aim of life, and lying and cheating as legitimate means for its attainment. But the tone is more refined. If sons take their fathers in, they do not insult them into the bargain. They behave to them with a certain amount of courtesy, and feel for them a certain amount of respect, and even affection. In the relations between the sexes there is less coarseness and far more sentiment. Pamphilus in the *Andria* and Æschinus in the *Adelphoe* promise to be affectionate husbands. Grasping courtesans of the type of Phronesium in Plautus' *Truculentus* (except, indeed, for the extravagant Bacchis in the *Heauton Timoroumenos*) do not appear. Indeed, Thais, in the *Eunuchus*, conciliates sympathy, and Bacchis, in the *Hecyra*, claims admiration. In the relations between masters and slaves there is more kindness, and the latter

are treated with far less brutality. The sound of blows, rarely silent in Plautine comedy, is not heard. Throughout the plays there is at once an ironic acquiescence in a very modest standard of morality and a not unkindly tolerance of human weakness which are Terence's inheritance from Menander, the friend of Epicurus.

If we turn from the general character of the plays to the manner of their execution, current opinion in Augustan times rightly conceded to Terence pre-eminence in art.\* His aim may be shortly stated† as the artistic representation of Hellenic life in pure Latin. To this aim may be referred all the salient features in Terence's treatment of comedy.

The first of these is homogeneity. Terence's plays are all of a piece. There is in them none of that confusion of things Greek and Roman which is so marked a characteristic of Plautine comedy. The scraps of Greek with which Plautus sought to give colour to his dialogue, the references to Roman places and institutions by which he sought to bring matters home to his audience, are alike excluded by Terence, who aims at being a Latin Menander.

Yet his plays are not mere translations. In fact, he protests in one of his prologues against the "obscure industry" which, by literal translation, turned good Greek into bad Latin plays. A consideration of Roman stage requirements led Terence, like Plautus, to combine two originals in one,‡ or to supplement a play mainly based

\* Hor. Ep. II. 1 59

† As, in effect, by Sellar.

‡ The *Andria* is based on the *Ἀνδρία* and *Περικθία* of Menander. The characters of Thraso and Gnatho, the soldier and the parasite, are introduced into the *Eunuchus*, based on Menander's play of that name, from the *Colax* of Menander. The scene of the abduction of Bacchis in the *Adelphoe* (= Menander's *Ἀδελφοί*) is from the *συναποθνήσκουσα* of Diphilus.

on one original with scenes and characters from another. But he combines far more skilfully than Plautus. The sutures are hardly to be detected, and might have escaped notice altogether if the author had not told us they were there.

Further, in the reduction of the lyric in favour of the iambic parts of his plays, as compared with Plautus Terence at once consults proportion and approximates more closely to his Greek models. Half the whole number of Terence's lines, as against one quarter of Plautus', are in iambic senarii. The overgrown cantica in various lyric metres, which in Plautus suspend the action and subordinate the interest of the words to dance and song, disappear. Except in the *Andria* and the *Adelphoe*, it may be said that no metres except the iambic and the trochaic are used, and even in these plays only two or three scenes open with short monologues in lyric metres, reflecting the character of the situation or the mood of the actor. For the rest Terence secures variety, especially where his object is to express excitement, by the rapid alternation of trochaic and iambic systems, often indicating pauses by the use of short lines.\*

The plots are worked out with consistency and the situations presented with clearness. The initial exposition of the *Andria* has been specially praised by Cicero † for its lucidity and charm, and that of the *Phormio* is hardly inferior to it. Terence's skill in this respect enables him to dispense with an explanation of the plot in his prologues, which, as will be seen, are used by him for another purpose, and thus to make his plays self-con-

\* Ribbeck, *Römische Dichtung*, i. 157.

† *De Or.* ii 80, 326.



tained. This is an artistic gain ; but as a consequence he sometimes finds it necessary to introduce in his first act characters who play no subsequent part in the comedy (προταρικά πρόσωπα). Such are Sosia in the *Andria*, Davus in the *Phormio*, Philotis and Syra in the *Hecyra*.

Terence excels in the distinctness and consistency of his characterisation.\* "How like himself is each!"† exclaims Geta in the *Phormio*, with reference to the two young cousins entrusted to his charge, and the remark applies as well to any other Terentian pair, whether they be lovers, like Phædria and Chærea in the *Eunuchus*, or old men, like Micio and Demea in the *Adelphoe*, or girls, like Antiphila and Bacchis in the *Heauton Timoroumenos*. Thanks to the distinctness with which he presents them, Terence is able to make more characters take part in a dialogue without fear of confusion than his predecessor. It is true that none of his characters stands out so boldly as, for instance, Ballio in Plautus' *Pseudolus* or Euclio in his *Aulularia*. Terence's characters are not so broadly drawn ; but they are studied with more care and limned with more restraint. To some extent he places himself at a disadvantage by his practice of using the same names for different characters in different plays. For instance, "Terence's Chremes" has no individuality, for there are four Chremes in Terence, three of them old men and one young.

The style of Terence has Attic grace and Attic charm. How swiftly he speeds over the unessential to make a picture spring to life with the deftest touches may be seen, for instance, in Geta's account of his visit to Antipho's

\* *Poscit palmam in ethesi . . . Terentius* (Varro, *Mensisæpea*, 399, Buecheler).  
 † *Quam uterque es similis suis*, *Phormio*, 501.

enslaver.\* Especially in his language is Terence's art revealed. "Here is pure speech," he announces in the prologue to the *Heauton Timoroumenos*, and it is as the "lover of pure discourse" that Julius Cæsar acclaims him. Plautus' characters use the language of the street, Terence's the conversational medium of the most cultivated circle in Rome. He has none of Plautus' exuberance of diction nor his boldness and fertility in coining words; in his puns, assonances, and alliterations he does not seek to imitate him. It is by virtue of his choiceness and precision of language that sentiments and expressions let fall naturally, and as it were unconsciously, in Terentian dialogues have become current coin.

Simo, in the *Andria*, is recounting how he wondered at the emotion displayed by his son Pamphilus at Chrysis' funeral, till he became aware of the existence of her pretty sister. "I have it now," he exclaims; *hinc illæ lacrumæ*. Hegio, in the *Phormio*, asks his friends what course they advise in view of the attitude of the parasite. One says "Advance," another "Retire," the third "Deliberate." Hegio's rueful comment is *Tot homines, quot sententiæ*. To translate would be absurd.

These qualities did not command complete success. The prologues to Terence's plays, used by him as apologetic prefaces, show that he had to contend on the one hand with professional criticism reinforced by professional

\* *Imus, venimus,  
Videmus. Virgo pulchra, et quo magis dices,  
Nil aderat adiumenti ad pulchritudinem.  
Capillus passus, nudus pes, ipsa horrida,  
Lacrumæ, vestitus turpis. ut ni vis boni  
In ipsa inesset forma, hæc formam extinguerent.*

*Phormio*, 53.

jealousy, on the other with the unappreciativeness of a public not educated up to the necessary level. In five of his prologues he deals with the charges brought by his critics, embodied in the person of Luscus of Lanuvium. They were four in number : (1) That he combined plays (*Andria*, 16) ; (2) that he was helped by his distinguished friends (*H. T.* 24, *Ad.* 15) ; (3) that he appropriated plays already Latinised, and therefore, according to Roman ideas, copyright (*Eun.* 22, *Ad.* 13) ; (4) that his language was thin and his style feeble (*Ph.* 5).

To the first he replies by giving precedents ; the second he parries, but neither denies nor admits ; against the third he defends himself in all good faith ; to the last he retorts by declaring that his assailant introduces into his plays matter unsuited for comedy, implying that in his own case language, style, and matter correspond. The prologues to the *Hecyra*, are, as we have seen (p. 56), devoted to explaining previous failures of the play and, if possible, preventing their recurrence.

Reference has been made to the allegation that Terence was helped by his distinguished friends. The story grew more definite as time went on, and Lucretius' patron, Memmius, declared explicitly that Scipio Africanus the younger used the agency of Terence to put his own compositions on the stage, while Nepos retails an anecdote identifying a particular passage in the *Heauton Timoroumenos* as written by Lælius \* Probably such statements are due merely to speculations about passages in the prologues, and as to these it need cause no surprise that Terence was not at pains to deny allegations calculated to please his patrons and not hurt him. That the plays were read in the Scipionic circle

\* Suetonius, *Vita Terentii*

before publication is likely enough ; that the help derived by the writer amounted to more than criticism and suggestion is most unlikely.

It was not to avoid reports like these, but rather to perfect his art by a nearer acquaintance with the manners and customs of the Greeks,\* that in 160 B.C. Terence undertook a journey to Greece. From that journey he never returned. Whether he was drowned on the homeward voyage or succumbed to illness at some place variously reported as Stymphalus or Leucadia, he met his death in the following year.

We know the names, and little more than the names,† of a few writers of comedy in Greek dress contemporary with Cæcilius and Terence, and with TURPILIUS (d. 103 B.C.) this form of drama came to an end. The very perfection and refinement achieved by Terence may have contributed to its decline in popularity. The probability of this is strengthened by the fact that after Terence's death there was a temporary revival of Plautine plays. But there were other causes: the exhaustion of the models, the competition of gladiatorial shows, and the growing desire of Latin writers, now schooled in adaptation, to produce something which should appeal more directly to a Latin audience.

The outcome of this last cause was comedy in Roman dress (*comedia togata*). What this was like we can infer only from titles and fragments. But the change of setting was accompanied by greater simplicity of plot, increased prominence given to female characters,‡

\* *Causa percipiendi Græcorum instituta moresque* (Suet., *Vit. Ter.*).

† Trabea, Atilius, Aquilius, Licinius Imbrex, Luscius Lanuvinus (Terence's *bête-noire*), Juventius, and Vatronius are enumerated by Schanz.

‡ Nine of fifteen titles of plays by Titinius bear female names.

connected with the fact that the action moved more in the circle of domestic life, and a difference in the rôle played by slaves.\* In this class of comedy usage forbade that they should be represented as cleverer than their masters. The scene was frequently laid in country towns,† and the titles show that the plays exhibited phases of middle or lower class provincial existence.‡ In the latter case the term tavern play (*comedia tabernaria*), sometimes given to this class of drama, was more strictly applicable.

We know the names of three writers of comedy in Roman dress: TITINIUS, who probably wrote soon after Terence's death, T. QUINTIUS ATTA (d. 77 B.C.)—both excelling in drawing character, and the latter particularly in the presentation of female character—and L. AFRANIUS (b. about 150 B.C.). Of the three Afranius was the most famous, and, to judge by the number of play-titles known to us, the most productive. But he was the least typical of the genre. In his hands this Roman comedy became more finished, more complex, more cosmopolitan, and, it may be added, less moral. In fact, it approximated more closely to *comedia palliata*.

It was commonly said in Augustan times that "Afranius' toga would have fitted Menander," § and Afranius' admiration for Terence is shown by the line in which he defines

\* Donatus on *Terence*, *Eun* 12, quoted by Schanz

† This may be inferred from the titles—*The Girl of Setium* (*Setina*), *The Girl of Velitra* (*Veliterna*), *The Ladies of Brundisium* (*Brundisinae*), by Titinius, *The Hydropathic* (*Aquæ Caldæ*), by Atta

‡ E.g., *The Comedy of the Fullers* (*Fullonia*) and *The Lady Lawyer* (*Iuris Perita*), by Titinius, *The Recruit's Departure* (*Tiro Proficiscens*), by Atta, *The Augur* (*Augur*), *The Coiffeur de Dames* (*Cinerarius*), *The Feast of the Crossways* (*Compitalia*), and *The Divorce* (*Divortium*), by Afranius

§ Hor *Ep* II 1 57.

the critics to name his like.\* Afranius' plays continued to be acted in Ciceronian, and even in Imperial times. A performance of his *Hypocrite* (*Simulans*) in the year of Cicero's recall from exile was made the occasion of a demonstration in the orator's favour, for the words

*Scoundrel!*

*This is the aftermath and end of all your evil living †*

were declaimed by the whole company, their gaze fixed on Clodius, with the result that he hurriedly left the theatre.

The primitive form of drama (*fabula Atellana*—p. 7) which was indigenous in Campania became popularised at Rome after the fall of Capua (211 B.C.). It was performed by young Romans who as citizens and amateurs were not subjected to the regulations or the disabilities imposed on the slave-actors of the regular stage. But about the time of Sulla two dramatists, POMPONIUS and NOVIUS,‡ gave the Atellan play a more literary form. At the same time it probably passed into the hands of professionals, being generally put on the stage in the form of after-pieces (*exodia*). The salient feature of the Atellan play was the presentation in different settings of the four stock characters,§ already mentioned (p. 7), Pappus, the old

\* *Terenti numne dicent similem quempiam?*

† *Hæc, tæterrimè,*

*Sunt postprincipia atque exitus male vitiosæ vitæ.*

Cic. *Pro Sest.* 55

‡ They were contemporaries (fl. circ. 90 B.C.), but as Pomponius is mentioned as the originator of this class of play (Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.* ii. 9, 5), he was probably slightly the elder. There are seventy titles of plays by Pomponius, forty-three of those by Novius.

§ These might be supplemented by others; indeed, the Romans added some more stock characters—Manducus, Lamia, Mania, Pytho.

dotard, Dossennus, the cunning old man, Maccus, the fool, and Bucco, the greedy braggart. This feature is illustrated by some of the titles. We have, for instance, *Old Dad as a Farmer* (*Pappus Agricola*), or *Old Dad defeated at the Poll* (*Pappus præteritus*), *A Pair of Sharpers* (*Duo Dossenni*), *Zany as a Maiden* (*Maccus Virgo*), *Zany as a Publican* (*Maccus Copo*), *Fatchaps in the Arena* (*Bucco Auctoratus*). Distinctive, again, of the Atellan play is the note of rusticity. This is evidenced by titles like *The Ass* (*Asina*), *The Kid* (*Capella*), *The Boar in Hospital* (*Verres ægrotus*) and *The Boar himself again* (*Verres salvus*), *The Yokel* (*Rusticus*), *The Vine-dressers* (*Vindemiatores*), *The Neat-herd* (*Bubulcus*) and *The Neat-herd as Cobbler* (*Bubulcus Cerdo*), and also by the special form of rustic stupidity or humour which insists on taking remarks in their literal meaning. For the rest, some of the titles, such as *The Sacristan* (*Æditunus*) and *The Fullers' Holiday* (*Fullones feriati*), show that the Atellan play, like the *comedia togata*, dealt with humble life in country towns or with racial characteristics (*Campani*, *Galli Transalpinii*); some are identical with those of *comedia palliata*, and some—e.g., *The Award of the Arms* (*Armorum Iudicium*) or *The Supposititious Agamemnon* (*Agamemno suppositicius*)—indicate that, like the *fabula Rhinthonica* (p. 38), it parodied tragedy.

Whether native to Latium,\* as is more probable, or derived from Magna Græcia,† the mime was originally a dance in character, performed to the accompaniment of the flute. Entertainments of this kind were given as interludes at the Floralia, first instituted in 238 B.C., and it is likely that they took place more frequently when

\* Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, III 528

† Ribbeck, *Römische Dichtung*, I. 217

the Floralia was made an annual festival in 175 B.C. In the time of Sulla the vogue of the mime increased, and about the year 50 B.C.\* it displaced the Atellan play for the purpose of after-pieces.

The mime was distinguished from the Atellan play by the absence of the stock characters and their corresponding masks. That actors of mime should appear unmasked was, indeed, necessary in order that the facial play essential to its originally mimetic character might be apparent, and the fact that they played barefooted (whence they were known as *planipedes*) is explained by the demand for agility natural in a performance which had been primarily a dance. Another point distinctive of the mime as opposed to the Atellan play was that it presented urban rather than rustic life. Even more coarse ("mimes of jest obscene" is Ovid's characterisation), it was largely concerned with intrigues in which the fool (*stupidus*), in the character of husband, was hoodwinked by an unfaithful wife and her lover. In the mime alone female parts were played by women, and while the actors—notably, perhaps, the fool—appeared in a many-coloured harlequin jacket (*centunculus*), the actresses wore the short mantilla (*ricinium*) which gave to this form of drama its alternative title of *fabula riciniata*.

Everything about the mime was to the last degree farcical and free and easy. Acted as interlude or after-piece in front of the drop scene, it mattered little that its plot should be consistent or convincing so long as the fun, often taking the form of sudden changes of fortune or resounding thwacks for the *stupidus*, was fast and furious.

\* Cicero, writing in 55 B.C., refers to the Atellan play as a usual form of entertainment (*Ad Fam.* vii. 1, 3), in 46 B.C. he says that it had been displaced by the mime (*Ad Fam.* ix. 16, 7).



The increased popularity won by the mime is associated with two writers : DECIMUS LABERIUS (105-43 B.C.), a Roman knight, and a younger contemporary, PUBLILIUS SYRUS, originally a Syrian slave. The story of how Julius Cæsar at the games given by him to celebrate the conclusion of the Civil War (45 B.C.) forced Laberius in competition with Syrus to act in one of his own mimes is well known. Laberius explained his appearance on the stage in a prologue at once dignified and pathetic :

*I, who for years past count have kept my name  
Unblemished, left my house a Roman knight,  
And shall return a mime ' I faith, to-day  
I've lived a day more than I should have lived ,*

and "got back" at the dictator more than once in such lines as

*He whom the world fears needs must fear the world*

a circumstance which may or may not account for his defeat.

It may be noted in passing that in the mime, which, entering the stage as it did by a side door, escaped the notice extended to more formal drama, considerable freedom of political allusion, illustrated by more than one fragment of Laberius, was traditional.

As its vogue increased the mime showed the same tendency to encroach upon the other forms of lighter drama which has already been observed in the *comedia togata* and the *fabula Atellana*. Of the forty-four titles of Laberius' mimes, some, like *The Watering-place* (*Aquæ Caldæ*) or *The Fullers*, might belong to Roman comedies or Atellan plays. *The Ghost* (*Phasma*) and *The Parasite* (*Colax*) are among titles which had already been borne by comedies in Greek

\* *Necesse est multos timeat quem multi timent.*

dress, and *Necromancy* (*Necromanteia*) and *Lake Avernus* suggest the mythological travesty. While words of plebeian use and homely similes, like Laberius' "I tumbled into love like a cockchafer into a basin" bear witness to its popular appeal, in the hands of its greater exponents the mime could assume a graver tone. In particular it was made the vehicle of those pithy utterances for which the Romans had a special love. In the case of Syrus this feature eclipsed all others. With two exceptions the very titles of his plays are lost, but a collection of apophthegms, genuine and apocryphal, has remained. This collection was made in the first instance by Gellius. In the days of Jerome schoolboys learnt them by heart. Supplemented from other sources, and in particular from a treatise on morals attributed to Seneca, they passed in the Middle Ages under the name of the "Sentences" of Seneca. Among those which are indisputably genuine, two chosen at random—

*Fortune's like glass, most brittle when most bright,*\*

and

*A remedy for all your wrongs—forget them*†

—may serve to exemplify at once their neatness and their common sense.

The days of Laberius and Syrus were the palmy days of the mime, and when at the beginning of the Empire acting in dumb show (*pantomimus*) became the rage, it might have seemed that the comic muse was silenced. But if the pantomime was the fashionable the mime remained the popular form of dramatic entertainment, and a long life was still before it.

\* *Fortuna vitrea est tum cum splendet frangitur*

† *Iniuriarum remedium est oblivio*

In the reign of Tiberius the Atellan play was revived once more by one MUMMIUS, and continued to be acted until it was eventually fused with the mime.\* The result of this amalgamation survived the Roman Empire and the Latin tongue. It persisted in the theatres of the people in its primitive character of an improvised drama, and though it was only in the hands of Angelo Beolco (about 1642) and Gozzi (about 1802) that it again assumed a literary form, "it has pervaded the theatre of Europe in the costumes of harlequin, columbine, and pantaloon." †

\* Munk, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (i 55), to whom I am here indebted.

† Garnett, *Italian Literature*, in this series, p 305

#### IV

### TRAGEDY AND SATIRE

It has been seen that while the Roman poets down to Ennius wrote alike epic, comedy, and tragedy, Ennius was followed by a succession of writers who devoted their attention to comedy alone. The case of tragedy is similar. Two tragic poets, PACUVIUS\* of Brundisium (220-130 B.C.) and ACCIUS of Pisaurum (170-86 B.C.), bridged with their long lives the interval between Ennius and Cicero. The production of Ennius' nephew—for such Pacuvius was—overlapped that of Accius, a play by each of them being acted in 140 B.C., when Pacuvius was eighty and Accius thirty, and Accius lived long enough to be able to converse with the youthful Cicero. With Accius we reach the time of the Social war, which may be taken as a convenient division between the earlier and the later or Ciceronian period of Roman literature during the Republic.

Despite his many years, Pacuvius' production was but small. Fragments of twelve plays survive, and we know the title of only one more, the *Protesilaus*. The scantiness of his output may perhaps be explained by the fact that besides being a poet he was a painter. Of his thirteen plays, one, *The Award of the Arms* (*Armorum Iudicium*),

\* I have derived much assistance from *Die römische Tragödie*, by Otto Ribbeck.

was modelled on a play by Æschylus, four (*Teucer*, *Chryses*, *Hermiona*, *Niptra*) reproduced originals by Sophocles, four (*Pentheus*, *Antiopa*, *Peribœa*, *Protesilaus*) were based on plays—in the cases of *Pentheus* and *Peribœa* bearing different names—by Euripides, while of four (*Iliona*, *Dulorestes*, or *Orestes the Slave*, *Atalanta*, and *Medus*) the originals are unknown. It was possibly to these divergences into bypaths of mythology, but more probably to his increased care in versification \* and the effort which he made to attain a distinctively tragic diction, that Pacuvius owed the reputation for learning† which he enjoyed with ancient critics. Not that his language was uniformly successful. To him, as to Cæcilius, Cicero denied the possession of the purest Latin idiom.‡ Persius' allusion to

*Antiopa*

*Her dolorific heart by woes oppress,§*

contains a hit at Pacuvius' stilted phraseology, and his description of dolphins as

*Nereus' spatulous-snouted, bent-backed flock ||*

illustrates his weakness for clumsily constructed compounds. Alliteration, however, of which the line just quoted supplies an instance, Pacuvius could use with skill. *Teucer*, returning to Salamis without either brother or brother's son, is greeted by Telamon with reproaches hissed in passionate sibilants,¶ while words of softest liquid sound suggest the water with which the old serving-woman in the *Niptra* would bathe the feet of the wanderer

\* Cicero, *Or* 36

† Quintilian, X. i. 97, Hor. *Ep* II. i. 56

‡ Cic *Brutus*, 258

§ Persius, *S* 1 78

|| *Neres repandirostrum incurviceruicum pecus*

¶ Cic *De Or* ii. 193, Ribbeck, *Römische Tragödie*, 225.

Ulysses, in whom she does not yet recognise her master.\* To refer once more to the *Teucer*: the hero's recital of how the glad departure for Troy, with calm seas and playing dolphins, is quickly followed by darkening skies and ruffled waters, rain and hail and storm, shows a pictorial power which is not surprising in a painter.† A single historical drama, *Paullus*, probably celebrating the exploits of the victor of Pydna, completes the list of Pacuvius' plays.

Accius enjoyed a life longer even than that of Pacuvius, and fragments of nearly fifty plays testify to a vastly greater productivity. Nearly all the great mythical cycles were systematically exploited by him. The Trojan war, with the capture of the city and the subsequent fortunes of the vanquished, the curse which afflicted the descendants of Tantalus, the troubles of the Theban royal house, the deeds and sufferings of the sons of Amphiaras and of the family of Ætolian Æneus, the Argonautic cycle and the myths of Prometheus, Io, Theseus, Perseus, Heracles, and the Bacchæ, all these furnished Accius with materials for his tragedies, based predominantly, as a comparison of titles shows, on those of Sophocles. Not without reason did Velleius Paterculus write that "Roman tragedy is concentrated in and centres round Accius."‡ One quality, characteristic of Roman tragedy in general, is especially distinctive of Accius—elevation of tone. The high spirit and fiery temper which are illustrated by sundry anecdotes about him—the refusal of the freedman's son to rise in the presence of the aristocratic dilettante C. Julius Cæsar Strabo, his prosecution of the actor who addressed him from the stage, his insistence on being

\* *Niptra*, frag 1; Ribbeck, *op cit.* 274.

† Ribbeck, *op cit.* 227.

‡ 1 17, 1.

represented by a tall statue, though his height was insignificant—found expression in the proud words with which Atreus proclaims his far-reaching sway,\* and in that grim utterance, a favourite with more tyrants than one, "Let them hate me, so they fear,"† with which he bids defiance to his subjects.

With such a temperament it is not surprising that Accius was strong in declamation. In his speeches Vergil himself found something to imitate. The words which Æneas, setting forth for his final conflict with Turnus, addresses to Ascanius are a version of Accius' rendering of Ajax's aspiration for his son

*Boy, mayst thou prove in valour like thy sue,  
In fortune unlike ‡*

Especially did he excel in making rival orators contend. In *The Award of the Arms* Ajax, comparing his claims to the panoply of Achilles with those of Ulysses, makes an effective use of irony :

*'Twas thou, forsooth, Ulysses, whom I saw  
Fell Hector with a stone, and, shield on arm,  
Rescue the Dorian fleet 'Twas I that day  
Who quailed, and counselled ignominious flight*

It is more remarkable that in Accius first, perhaps, among Latin poets we find a consciousness of the charm of simple natural beauty :

*By chance ere dawn, hot sunshine's harbinger,  
When rustics drive the horn'd kine afield  
To cleave with steel the dewy, steaming earth  
And from the yielding furrow lift the sods §*

\* Probably from the *Atrius* (Quint ix. 4, 140)

† *Oderint dum metuant* Cic *De Off* i 97

‡ *Virtute sis par, dispar fortunæ patris* Cf *Æn* xii 435

§ *Ænomaus*.

To the long list of his tragedies from the Greek Accius added two historical plays in which he celebrated the national heroes Brutus and the younger Decius. King Tarquin's recital of his dream about the former and the soothsayer's interpretation of it are quoted by Cicero in his book on divination,\* and the scanty fragments of the play on Decius include his crucial declaration :

*As my father did before me, to the foe my life I'll vow.†*

Professor Sellar has remarked that it is difficult to say of any fragment whether it is by Pacuvius or Accius. And it is true that the writings of all the tragic poets are characterised by a certain archaism, an archaism which an enthusiastic admirer of Flavian eloquence possibly had in his mind when he irreverently implied that Pacuvius and Accius were "mouldy."‡ It is perhaps to be explained by the Roman idea of the dignity appropriate to the presentation of a mythical and heroic world. But in spite of this progress is perceptible. It shows itself, as has been seen, with Pacuvius in the development of tragic diction, with Accius in increased rhetorical skill and greater elaboration of periodic structure. Oratory, studied with ardour in the stormy Gracchan days, both profited by and reacted upon contemporary dramatic writing.

Probably in consequence of this improvement in technique the palm of tragedy seemed to the Romans to lie between Pacuvius and Accius. ATILIUS, who lived about 200 B.C., and the amateurs, if one may call them so, as being politicians and orators as well, TITIUS (*fl. circ.* 100) and C. JULIUS CÆSAR STRABO (120-86 B.C.),

\* *De Div.* 1. 44-5.

† *Patrio exemplo et me discabo et animum devoro hostibus.*

‡ Tacitus, *Dial. de Oratoribus*, 20



who both gave tragedy a lighter tone, do not appear to have entered into the competition.

Cicero is inclined to put Pacuvius first.\* Yet in sheer poetic power Ennius assuredly far surpassed both his successors. Take the opening of his *Iphigenia*, in which, as in Euripides, Agamemnon, coming from his tent, asks his old servant: "What of the night?"

Ag. *On heaven's high resonant shield o' nights upborne,  
Watchman, is aught to see?*

Watchman *The warn is up,  
Driving the stars again and ever again  
Night's dizzy path along.†*

Professor Mackail has justly remarked on the genius which, while using words entirely different, has reproduced the solemn effect of the original. There is nothing so poetical in the fragments of Pacuvius or of Accius.

What estimate are we to form of Roman tragedy as a whole? The Romans themselves, while they held that their comedy was a lame affair,‡ were pleased with their imitation of Greek tragedy §. In accounting for this satisfaction Horace has indicated both their strength and their weakness. The diction of the Roman tragic writers never falls below the level of tragic dignity, but it occasionally degenerates into bombast and constantly tends to be verbose. And yet it is in declamation if anywhere that their excellence is to be found. Ulysses in

*De Opt. Gen. Or. 2*

† A. *Quid noctis videtur in altisono  
Cæli clipeo?*

V. *Superat temo  
Stellas cogens iterum atque iterum  
Noctis sublime iter.*

‡ *In comædia claudicamus* (Quint. X. 1. 99).

§ *Hor. Epist. II. 1. 165*

the *Niptra* of Accius was held to have mastered his agony with more of Roman endurance than was displayed by his Sophoclean prototype. Modifications of this kind, which from the Roman point of view were improvements, there may have been. But on the whole the strength of the Roman tragedians does not seem to have lain in the conception and presentation of character. It is to fine passages rather than to fine characters that their admirers refer. In their treatment of plots they accumulate incident (if necessary by combining two originals), elaborate dramatic situations, and emphasise political interest. But to declare, as Velleius Paterculus\* does, that they challenge comparison with the Greek tragedians, and to strike a balance by crediting the Greeks with more polish and the Romans with more vigour, is absurd. Roman tragedy necessarily lacked the national and the religious appeal of its original. Nor did it attempt to deal afresh with the problems of life. Rationalistic scepticism and denunciation of superstition may be found in the fragments of all the Roman writers of tragedy; but there is in it no trace of that endeavour to reinterpret the old tales in the light of contemporary religious and philosophic aspiration which supplies so large an element in the interest of the Greek drama.

Roman tragedy enjoyed more than a *succès d'estime*. Down to the end of the Republic plays by its most eminent writers continued to be performed with all the aid which could be given by gorgeous theatrical setting; and several passages in Cicero's correspondence testify to the quickness with which a Roman audience could perceive how the words of an old play might be applied to the political situation of the moment.

\* *Hist. Rom.* ii. 9, 2.

Yet even when the plots had the advantage of novelty tragedy was less popular at Rome than comedy, and it naturally felt the effects of the competition with other entertainments, from which, as has been seen, comedy suffered, to a still greater degree. With Accius the writing of tragedies for the stage practically came to an end. Plays such as those of which Quintus Cicero composed four in sixteen days, the *Edipus* of Julius Cæsar, which his great nephew deemed it a pious duty to suppress, or the *Ajax* of which its author, Augustus, himself reported that "he had fallen on his sponge," were written as fashionable literary exercises, or at any rate do not seem to have been performed at Rome. Tragedy was and remained an exotic

Very different was the case with another branch of literature, one which, being of a character distinctly congenial to the Italian temperament, had already received at any rate some sort of an indigenous development. A member of the Scipionic circle gave to satire a vigorous expression and a characteristic form, and proved the pioneer of a distinguished succession of writers in this branch of letters.

PUBLIUS LUCILIUS, a Campanian of good position, was born at Suessa Aurunca in 180 B.C. We hear of him first in the Numantine war, serving in the cavalry under his friend Scipio Africanus the younger. On the fall of Numantia he returned (133 B.C.) to a Rome in which party spirit ran high. But as a member of one of the allied communities he could take no part in politics, and his wealth made it as unnecessary as it would have been distasteful to sacrifice his independence in order to make money. He lived his own life, an interested critic of current events, and as the vehicle of his opinions he

chose that somewhat indeterminate literary form which Ennius and, seemingly, his nephew Pacuvius had used for the conversational treatment of miscellaneous topics. During the next quarter of a century (131-105 B.C.) Lucilius produced thirty books of satires. Of these fragments amounting in all to about 1300 lines survive. Some of them have been quoted by Cicero for their matter, but more by Nonius and other grammarians because they happened to contain some archaic word or form. Yet so characteristic of Lucilius was everything which he wrote that they go some way towards helping us to form an idea of the writer.\*

In the earliest of his satires he announces that he writes, "not of portents nor winged serpents," † but, it is to be presumed, of everyday happenings, that he addresses neither savant nor ignoramus, but the average man, ‡ and that he gives expression to that which is in his heart. § The time offered material for unfavourable comment, and he did not hesitate to make it. As the intimate friend of the most eminent man in the State, Lucilius was saved from the fear of sharing the fate of Nævius. Like the writers of old Greek comedy, he freely criticised his contemporaries, and was not afraid to mention them by name. This was the feature about the satirist which impressed his successors most. Lucilius, says Persius, "lashed the city." He imported into satire that element

\* F. Marx, to whom I am greatly indebted in this section, has in the introduction to his edition of Lucilius done much to recover the life of the poet. The references below are to the lines as numbered in his edition (*C. Lucili Carminum Reliquiæ*, Leipzig, 1904)

† 587. This is a bit at Pacuvius' *Medus*, in which Medea appears on the stage in a car drawn by winged serpents.

‡ 593.

§ 590.

of censorious invective which is now connoted by the name. In a word, he made satire satiric.

Of the subjects of his strictures the best known were political opponents of Scipio Æmilianus, such as Q. Cæcilius Metellus and P. Mucius Scævola, who was carried forward by his Gracchan sympathies when Scipio's consideration for the wealthy Italian landholders warned him to call a halt. Against these men personally there was perhaps not much to be said; indeed, Metellus' strenuous advocacy of marriage was more creditable to him than was the spirit in which Lucilius and his patron decried it to themselves. But it was as a rule on grounds of character rather than on differences of political opinion that Lucilius based his attacks. It is true that P. Cornelius Lentulus Lupus owed the position he held as *princeps senatus* from 131 to 125 B.C. to the influence of Metellus, and the orator Cn. Papirius Carbo was not unreasonably suspected of having caused Scipio's death. But it was as a gourmand and an unjust judge that Lucilius satirises the first, and as corrupt and atheistical that he assails the second. The Greek affectation of Albucius (88) and the gluttony of the prætor Gallonius (1238) and Titinius (169) are ridiculed for reasons wholly unconnected with politics. Lovers, misers, gourmands, and Stoic philosophers all come beneath Lucilius' lash. Nor does he spare the rabble. A few graphic lines survive in which he describes the feverish excitement and absolute unscrupulousness with which populace as well as nobles played the game of party warfare.\* On the whole, it was truly said that he

*Assailed the lords and those of humbler birth,  
Kind to worth only and the friends of worth.†*

\* 1230

† Hor. S. II. 1, 68 (Conington's translation).

It would, however, be a mistake to exaggerate the denunciatory element in Lucilius' satires. It was more prominent in the earlier than the later books. Thus, when in 125 B.C. Lucilius resumed the literary activity which he had intermitted after the publication of his first five books (now numbered xxvi.-xxx.), and at the opening of his second series (i.-xx.) describes how the gods in council decide that the State can only be saved by the death of Lupus, he was satirising one no longer living, for Lupus had died in the preceding year. Apart from this, Lucilius made his satires the receptacle of all his experiences, interests, and opinions, attacks on persons being, as a rule, introduced only incidentally. In one (iv.) he described a journey made by him from home to Messina to visit an estate which he owned in Sicily, the first of a series of versified itineraries extending through Julius Cæsar, Horace, Persius, Ausonius, and Rutilius Namatianus to Constantius Manasses. One (ii.) described a trial, the prosecution of Scævola by Albucius, another (iv.) a gladiatorial combat. For at least three (v. 2, xx. 561-578, xxviii. 2) the matter is supplied by the description of dinners and the conversation which took place at them, while two (xi., xiv. 2) were concerned with the praises of Scipio. In one satire (ix. 2) Lucilius dealt with questions of orthography, and in one at least (xxix. 3) with literary criticism. We know that he found fault with some of Ennius' lines as lacking in dignity,\* he refers feelingly to the gloom induced by listening to "some contorted poem of Pacuvius,"† and he gibes at the wit of Accius as being of a piece with his stature (which was small) and his countenance, which it may be assumed the satirist regarded as unattractive.‡ One book of which little remains bore the name of a

\* Hor. S. l. 10, 53.

† 875.

‡ 794

mistress of Lucilius, Collyra. In fact, to call in Horace again, Lucilius treated his books as confidential friends.

*So there, as in a votive tablet penned,  
We see the veteran's life from end to end.\**

The personality thus revealed was a forcible and original one. The leading characteristic of Lucilius was independence. He will be what he is and say what he thinks.

*As for being a state contractor farming Asiatic rents,  
Not Lucilius—no, thank you. This and nothing else contents.*

Hating shams and always on the side of right as he understood it, he was more conspicuous as the advocate of public than of private virtue. His language is coarse, his standard of morality not higher than that of his contemporaries—indeed, in some respects, for he was not untouched by Greek demoralisation, below it. He enjoyed life and appreciated a good dinner and good talk. Among other things he was a horsy man; as an old cavalry officer it was natural enough that he should be. His fragments abound with references to horses, whether he is recalling "the rough Campanian steed," which could "beat another horse over a mile, but over a longer course would be nowhere, and look, in fact, as if he were going the other way," † or the Spanish horse, "not much to look at, but a good mover and a capital mount," ‡ or that ill-tempered brute which "chewed up the lordly bailiff, the odd-job man, and the cowman, and completely cornered them." § Likewise he compares the Syrian hostess who at

\* Hor S II 1, 32-34 (Conington's translation)

† 506

‡ 476.

§ 512.

*Vilicum Aristocratem, mediastinum atque bubulcum  
Commanducatus corrumpit, ad incerta adegit.*

Palinurus thrust her pretty feet into her slippers with such haste to entertain the belated travellers with "a raw yearling filly." \* Horace calls him "courteous"; but the fragments suggest rather the epithet genial. It is true that while he is free in his criticisms he assumes no airs of superiority. To one whom he has attacked he says: "I don't object to your drubbing me soundly, plucking and singeing [me, and tossing me in a blanket," † and he protests:

*I don't mind the least being laughed at · loss of temper is a crime. ‡*

Still, he is wanting in the delicate urbanity of Horace, and in the words with which he begins a letter to a friend, "You don't ask me how I am; however, since I have not joined the majority, I will tell you," § there is a trifle more causticity than the later satirist would have allowed himself.

Such a character found expression in a diction more graphic than conventional, and often reinforced by a recurrence to the language of the camp. A couch which has seen its best days is "as old as the flood," || the miser "claws" his gold, and such a word as "bathlessness" (*imbalmities*) shows an aptitude for coining comic words. His comparisons are often quaint. A large fish is described as "longer than a crane extended at full length in flight," ¶ the volcano at Lipara reminds him of the forum illuminated for the Roman

\* 130

† 1038.

‡ 658. *Facile deridemur, scimus capital esse irascier.*

§ 181

*Quo me habeam facto, tam etsi non quæris, docebo,  
 Quando in eo numero mansi quo in maxima non est  
 Pars hominum*

|| 251 *A Deucalione grabati*

¶ 168.



games,\* a one-eyed man is described as "having two feet and one eye—like a split pig in a butcher's shop." †

It has already been seen that Lucilius gave satire a tone which, in greater or less measure, it was destined to retain. It was not otherwise with regard to its form. Nearly every feature—anecdote, fable, scene, apostrophe, dialogue—which characterised subsequent Latin satire may be detected in the fragments of Lucilius. In metre too he showed the way. His two earliest books (xxvi., xxvii.) he wrote in seven-footed trochaics, at all times a popular Latin metre. In the next two (xxviii., xxix.) he combined this metre with iambs and hexameters. The next (xxx.) he wrote in hexameters alone, and having thus felt his way to this metre he adhered to it, and it became the recognised metre of Latin satire. The fact that books xxi.–xxv. were in elegiacs hardly makes it necessary to qualify this statement, for these books, probably published after Lucilius' death, did not contain satires, but epitaphs on slaves of his household, with whom the bachelor poet was on the friendliest terms.

Horace remarks that had Lucilius lived in Augustan days he would have erased much. It is likely enough. In the thirteen lines descriptive of virtue addressed to Cn. Postumius Albinus, which constitute the longest fragment of his writings which we possess, one may surmise that he would have deleted the words "virtue is" five times. The insertion of Greek words, though no affectation, but the outcome of a genuine admiration for Greek, or of a haste which could not wait to struggle

146.

† 1342

*Uno oculo fedibusque duobus, dimidiatus  
Ut porcus*

with the poverty of his native tongue, is nevertheless a blemish. Though he could write a line not unworthy of Ennius or of Lucretius,\* his versification was as a rule rough to the last degree. Poetry his satires were not. That he knew this himself he shows by calling them "discourses" (*sermones*). Indeed, he seems to imply that to drink of the fountain of the Muses was an aspiration which he must be content to forego. The persons of Flavian times of whom Quintilian says that they preferred Lucilius to all poets whatsoever must have belonged to that class of man which does not appreciate poetry, but is only too delighted to find something called by that name which it can understand.

\* *E g*, 1008. *Quantum haurire animus Musarum e fontibus gestit*

## THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY AND ORATORY

THE art of prose-writing, which in Italy, as elsewhere, was of slower development than that of poetry, was so little advanced at the time of the first great invasion of Hellenic influences that these affected it in a different way. It was so at any rate in the case of history. To have written history in the style of the twelve Tables (see p. 11) would have been impossible. And the earliest attempt at historic record can have achieved very little in the way of developing an historic style. The high-priest (*pontifex maximus*) wrote down events or items of information on a whitened board inscribed with the names of the magistrates of the year. Such boards, exhibited at the high priest's house to provide information, were preserved to form a record. Destroyed at the capture of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C., they were as far as possible replaced, and the practice of exhibiting them continued until some date between 133 and 114 B.C., when P. Mucius Scævola, then *pontifex maximus*, redacted their contents in eighty books thereafter known as the Annals-in-Chief or the Great Chronicle (*Annales Maximi* \*). Cicero says of the Great Chronicle

\* The name is variously explained as referring to the fact that they originated with the chief priest or to their length. The latter explanation is probably the true one

that it was "the most meagre affair in the world," and this is likely enough, if what Cato and Polybius call "the board at the high priest's house" merely contained statements about military events, eclipses, or the price of corn. There occur in the earlier books of Livy sundry brief summaries, of which the following may serve as a specimen: "Consuls M. Valerius, P. Postumius. This year a victory was won over the Samnites. The Consuls triumphed. Then the Sabines prepared for war on a larger scale." \* Such summaries probably represent extracts from the Great Chronicle made by predecessors of Livy. It is likely that the style was as rudimentary as the content was meagre. Now at Rome the writing of history was held to be an occupation worthy of men of position. The writers belonged to a class which knew Greek, and, unlike the playwrights, who catered for the entertainment of the populace, they addressed a public which understood it. The result was that the earliest Roman historians preferred the more flexible language and wrote in Greek.

We know something of five such writers,† and besides the fact that they wrote in Greek they possessed some features in common. All narrated events from the earliest times to their own, in the former case cursorily, in the latter with more detail, and their arrangement, like that of their principal source, the pontifical record, was annalistic. The earliest of them, Q. Fabius Pictor, was also the most considerable.

Fabius seems to have given the now familiar legends of

\* Livy, II. 16, 1.

† Mainly from citations in Polybius, Livy, or Dionysius of Halicarnassus. These may be found in *Veterum Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiæ*, H. Peter

the beginnings of Rome in some detail, and there are slight indications that he used the native ballads. While his treatment of the intermediate period was meagre, when he came to his own days, those of the second Punic war, it was fuller, and he could draw on a considerable experience, for he had fought against the Gauls in 225 B.C., and, being a senator at the time, was sent to consult the oracle of Delphi after the disaster at Cannæ. Polybius, if he criticises him as misled by patriotic prejudice and family feeling, pays him the compliment of using him as an authority. His contemporary L. Cincius Alimentus, prætor in 210 B.C., had the misfortune to be captured by Hannibal, a misfortune perhaps in some degree compensated by the advantage of deriving information to be used in his history from the Carthaginian general's own mouth.\* P. Cornelius Scipio, son of the conqueror of Zama, is credited by Cicero with charm of style. C. Acilius had sufficient command of Greek to act as interpreter when the famous embassy of Greek philosophers was introduced in the Senate in 155 B.C. A. Postumius Albinus was an enthusiastic Hellenist. He dedicated his history to Ennius, the *coryphæus* of Hellenism, opened it with a discussion of Hellenising and Romanising tendencies, and begged to be excused for any errors he might have made in a language which was not his own.

A contemporary writer asked under what compulsion Albinus found himself to incur the risk which he apprehended. The question was pertinent enough, and the critic had a right to make it, for he had already shown that contemporary knowledge on practical subjects could be expressed in Latin, and was soon to show that the same was

\* Livy, xxi 38, 3

true in the domain of history. M. PORCIUS CATO (234-149) B.C.), soldier, orator, and man of affairs, while possessing exceptional ability, was a typical Roman of the old school, and as such viewed the spread of Greek influence with disfavour. "Whenever," he warns his son, "that nation shall give us its literature it will be the ruin of the State." He set himself to avert the danger. He wrote instructions in agriculture, medicine, and oratory in the form of admonitions to his son.\* If these admonitions were intended as a complete guide to practical life, they probably also included jurisprudence and the art of war. That Cato wrote on the former subject we know, and some fragments dealing with the latter survive. But these fragments contain no indication that they were addressed to a learner. It appears, then, that Cato dealt with these two subjects in works other than the *Præcepta*. He certainly did so in the case of agriculture, for his book on the subject (*De Agriculura*) has been preserved, being the only one of Cato's works which we possess. Incomplete from one point of view, for while much is said of the cultivation of the vine and olive, corn-growing is hardly mentioned, it is from another comprehensive, for under agriculture it includes domestic economy. Beginning with the praise of husbandry, it ends with directions for curing hams; and in the interval we find advice about buying a farm, lists of requisites, cultural instructions, recipes especially for the making of wine, remedies including charms, forms of sale and contract and forms of prayer, given in a certain disorder which may have arisen during the long period in which the work was in circulation. The treatment is severely prosaic: injunctions such as "In a manger the bars should be a foot apart" and "Be sure you have a

\* *Præcepta ad Filium*, or *Ad Filium* alone

large dung-heap" represent the level. The tone is somewhat hard, the slave being throughout regarded merely as an instrument of husbandry. He is listed with ploughs and hoes and benches, is to be economised on when ill, and sold when decrepit. Thrift, indeed, is strictly inculcated. "Remember," says Cato, when recommending indoor work on wet days, "that if nothing is being done expenditure is going on all the same." These features are relieved by grim humour and shrewd wisdom, sometimes expressed in proverbial form. When indicating the order of proceedings at the inspection of a farm, after mentioning the salutation of the household god and an inquiry into the state of farming operations, Cato continues: "The bailiff says that he has done his best, but that the slaves have been ill, the weather bad, that the slaves have played truant, or have been requisitioned for public service. When the bailiff has made these and many other excuses bring him back to the account of work done." To emphasise the advantage of personal supervision, he observes in effect that no one has eyes at the back of his head\*. The advice, "Buy not what you want, but what you must have: what you don't want is dear at a penny," which is quoted by Seneca, belongs, perhaps, to the *Præcepta*.

Though the diction has been modernised, probably in the Augustan age, the series of terse injunctions, lists, and formulas of which it is composed must still give a fairly correct impression of the style of the *De Agricultura* as it left Cato's hand, and this suggests a relation between this truly Latin work and the *vaticinia* of primitive times. In another work, indeed, *An Utterance about Conduct* (*Carmen de Moribus*), in which occurs the sentiment that it is better to wear out than to rust out,

\* *Frons occipitio prior est* (Cato *De Agr* 4).

Cato doubtless had in his mind the maxims of Appius Claudius,\* the connection between which and the *vaticinia* is evident, and he prefaces his warning in the *Præcepta* that the Greek physicians had conspired to poison all the "barbarians" with the words: "This too is the utterance of the seer."†

Late in life Cato turned his attention to historical writing, and in his *Origins* (*Origines*) produced the earliest history written in Latin.‡ The title had reference to the contents of the three opening books, for while the first narrated the history of Rome under the kings, the second and third dealt with the origins of the nations and cities of Italy. The fourth book, according to Cornelius Nepos, was concerned with the first and the fifth with the second Punic war, the last two with the wars which followed down to the year of the author's death. The difference in character between the first three and the last four books has suggested the supposition that the latter formed a separate work, perhaps called *The Wars* (*Bella*). Cato was engaged in writing them at the time of his death, and it is possible that after it they were published in combination with the first three books, which had appeared earlier. The *Origins* possessed some distinctive features reflecting the independence and originality of the author. At the opening of his fourth book he explained that he had no intention of giving details of the kind recorded on "the board at the high priest's house," but he lent interest to his history by the mention of notable phenomena observable in Italy and Spain, and diversified it by the introduction of

\* P 12

† *Et hoc puta vatem dixisse.*

‡ The work is lost Citations are given by H Peter, *op cit.* p 51 ff. Cornelius Nepos, *Cato*, c. 3, indicates the contents of the books



speeches, though probably only speeches actually delivered by himself. As a protest against the use of history by noble authors for the glorification of themselves and their families, he omitted the names of generals, while humorously mentioning that of the bravest elephant in the Punic wars. However, if the account of his operations in Spain in the thirty-fourth book of Livy was, as is probable, largely drawn from the *Origins*, it is clear that he was not at all inclined to depreciate his own merits.\* Nepos states that he related events under various heads (*capitulatim*), which seems to imply that he abandoned the annalistic arrangement. If so his example was not followed. But in a far more important respect he marks an epoch. Roman historians henceforth wrote in Latin, and Cato may in fact be regarded as the father of Latin prose.

The first of the Latin annalists was L. Cassius Hemina, a younger contemporary of Cato, and he was followed by four or five writers of Gracchan times. Known to us are Q. Fabius Maximus, L. Calpurnius Piso, the opponent of Tiberius Gracchus, C. Sempronius Tuditanus, Cn. Gellius, the length of whose work is shown by the fact that we have a citation from the ninety-seventh book, and Cn. Fannius Strabo, stepson of Lælius, first the supporter, then the opponent of Gaius Gracchus. All, according to Cicero,† followed the manner of the "Great Chronicle" and wrote in a meagre style. They narrated facts without embellishing them. Piso, however, wrote with a moral purpose, and denounced corruption; also he endeavoured to rationalise the myths. Fannius

\* Cf. Livy, xxiv 15, 9 *Cato ipse haud sane detractor laudum suarum*

† *De Or* ii 53

Strabo introduced speeches like Cato, but probably on a less restricted scale.

With L. Coelius Antipater a fresh departure is made. He wrote a work in seven books on one subject, the second Punic war, and thus inaugurated the historic monograph. Besides this he used foreign as well as native sources, in the Greek historian Silenus, who accompanied Hannibal on his campaigns, and Polybius. A passage in Livy where he is cited (xxvii. 27) shows that in deciding between conflicting accounts he exercised some critical power. Lastly, unlike his predecessors, he made some attempt at rhetorical ornament. In Cicero's phrase, "he blew the trumpet with rather more vigour." The engrossing character of contemporary politics was reflected in a further change. Sempronius Asellio, who served as a military tribune in the Numantine war, wrote a book dealing only with contemporary history. This work, called, not *Annales*, but *Rerum Gestarum Libri* (probably fourteen in number) seems to have covered the period from the Numantine war to the death of M. Livius Drusus in 91 B.C. Like Piso before him Asellio wrote for edification, but, in addition to this, influenced doubtless by Polybius, he rose to a more philosophical conception of history, and realised the distinction between the record of events, which to the Romans was implied by the title *annales*, and the more detailed and reasoned treatment to which they applied the term *historiæ*.\* "Annals," he writes, "can have no effect in making men quicker to defend the

\* Peter (*Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*, I. p. xlix) seems right in rejecting the view that *annales* meant ancient and *historiæ* contemporary history. It arose merely from the circumstance that recent events were in practice found better suited for reasoned treatment than those of early times.

State or slower to do wrong." "I apprehend that it is not enough for us merely to state what was done. One should also point out the purpose and the motive of the several actions."\* Meanwhile the exigencies of political life called into existence the pamphlet and the memoir. Of the former the defence of his policy dedicated by Gaius Gracchus to his faithful supporter M. Pomponius was the earliest example. The latter was stimulated by the party strife which culminated in the first civil war. There was much that called for explanation, much of which the actors found it desirable to give their own account. Hence the autobiography of M. Æmilius Scaurus, the astute *princeps senatus* at the time of the Jugurthine war, in three, and that of M. Rutilius Rufus, the immaculate but unjustly exiled provincial governor, in five books, and more important than these, the twenty-two books of Sulla's memoirs, in which the dictator sought to justify his cause and show himself the favourite of heaven. Hence the account of his consulship which Q. Lutatius Catulus, colleague of Marius in 101 B.C., addressed to the poet Furius, an account which can hardly have conceded the sole credit of the victory over the Cimbri to the consul of plebeian birth †

With this development of the writing of contemporary history in various forms the compilation of annals still continued. Efforts were made, however, in different ways to enhance the interest of the narrative. It is true that the style of M. Claudius Quadrigarius ‡ was simple. The *naïveté* of his short and unconnected sentences appealed

\* Gellius, v 18, 7

† These pamphlets and memoirs are lost. Sulla's autobiography is cited a good many times by Plutarch.

‡ Fragments in Peter, *op cit* 205 sqq

to admirers of the archaic such as Gellius. But we see from two fragments, both descriptive of famous single combats, that he told his story with considerable detail. The fact that he passed over the early history of Rome and began his work, which was probably carried down to the death of Sulla, with the capture of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C. shows, perhaps, that he had a more exacting standard of historical certainty than had heretofore prevailed. No such scruples were entertained by Valerius of Antium.\* Not only did he begin with the earliest times, but he narrated events in greater detail than his predecessors, and ventured on a precision of statement which provoked the scepticism of Livy.† He exaggerated numbers (thus while Silenus says that 60 military engines were captured by the Romans at New Carthage, Valerius puts the number at 19,000!), magnified the exploits of the Valerian family, and unduly favoured the Scipios in the account of the proceedings taken against them. Nevertheless his seventy-five books, copious, fluent, and written in modern language, free from archaisms, evidently enjoyed considerable vogue. Livy, while mistrusting, cites him by name more often than any other author.

While the production of the first artistic history was an achievement reserved for the Ciceronian age, we may mention here by anticipation an older and a younger contemporary of Cicero who seem to have made more effort to consult original documents than their predecessors. G. LICINIUS MACER, father of the poet and orator Calvus, a democrat who,‡ especially in his tribunate

\* Fragments in Peter, *op. cit.* 237 sqq.

† Livy, III. 5, 12, Peter, *op. cit.* cccvii.

‡ Fragments in Peter, *op. cit.* 300 sqq.

in 73 B.C., strove to restore the tribunician powers destroyed by Sulla, wrote a history of Rome from its foundation probably down to his own times. That he narrated the early history more cursorily than Valerius is shown by the fact that while Valerius in his second book dealt with Numa Pompilius, Macer at the same stage was occupied with the Pyrrhic war. His democratic predilections appeared in the insertion of popular harangues, stigmatised by Cicero as inept, impudent, and bombastic. But it is his attempt to go back to original documents which has attracted special attention to Macer. He is quoted as referring to certain linen rolls (*libri lini*) preserved in the temple of Moneta on the Capitol. While there is no reason to believe with Mommsen that these documents were invented by Macer, they are not above suspicion, and it seems that in his use of them Macer showed neither caution nor skill. At any rate, his adhesion to them involved him in some contradictions with probability, as well as with the authority of earlier annalists. Q. Ælius Tubero,\* who, after fighting for Pompey against Cæsar in early life, wrote juristic works and annals in an archaic style, employed the linen books with more caution, and perhaps with greater accuracy. Thus, while, like Macer, he notes a discrepancy between these and the older annalists, unlike him he hesitates to follow them, and it may be noted that he names the consuls of the year 434 B.C. differently from Macer while referring to the same source.†

The development of oratory, although long deferred, was far more rapid and complete than that of historical writing. The conditions of life in Rome had from

\* Citations in Peter, *op cit* 311 sqq

† Livy, IV 23, 1, Peter, *op cit.* cccxlv1

the earliest times made oratory a necessity for her public men. But it had been used as an expedient, not cultivated as an art. Speeches were rarely written, though an exception must be made in the case of funeral orations, which after delivery frequently found their way into family records. This is why out of the three earliest recorded speeches two \* were of this character. The other, the speech of Appius Claudius, has already been noticed (p. 12) as standing by itself. Moreover, in comparison with what it afterwards became, the field of eloquence was restricted. It is true Livy describes M. Crassus Dives (cos 205 B.C.) as "most eloquent whether a case had to be pleaded or a proposal to be advocated or opposed in Senate or assembly," yet, so long as government remained in the hands of the Senate, eloquence was mainly senatorial or deliberative. Such, it is to be supposed, was that of M. Cornelius Cethegus (cos 204 B.C.), whom Ennius characterised as "the very heart of persuasion." † But when in 133 B.C. Tiberius Gracchus, and eleven years later his brother Gaius, appealed from Senate to people, and the long struggle was begun which resulted, after some eighty years, in the overthrow of republican government, an imperative demand arose for the eloquence of the platform. Already (149 B.C.) the establishment of the first permanent criminal court, a court in which prosecutions of provincial governors were conducted before a large panel of jurors under the presidency of a prætor, had made an opening for forensic eloquence, and the stimulus thus given was all the more effective because a successful prosecution was the best

\* That of Fabius Cunctator on his son, and that of Q. Cæcilius Metellus on his father (221 B.C.)

† *Suadæ medulla* (Cicero, *Brutus*, § 59).

advertisement for an aspiring politician, and the political struggle just referred to was largely fought out in the courts.

In circumstances such as these that second wave of Hellenic influence which may be dated from the end of the third Macedonian war (168 B.C.) made itself especially felt in the domain of oratory. At first it operated merely through an increased acquaintance with the works of Greek philosophers and orators, later through the definite study of Greek rhetorical methods by the young. The expulsion of the Greek teachers of rhetoric in 161 B.C. was only a temporary measure, and indicates the antagonism felt towards the new methods at their inception.

By the beginning of the first century B.C. rhetoric, preceded by grammar and followed by philosophy, had been established as a stage in the ordinary education of a Roman youth. Nor was it only by Greeks that it was taught. To meet the requirements of political life instruction was given by Latin teachers. And although, partly on account of its more empirical character, partly as supplying democracy with the equipment of the ruling class, this development was regarded with suspicion, and in 92 B.C. the Latin teachers of rhetoric were expelled from Rome by the censors, one of them the foremost orator of his time, yet the Latin rhetoricians were not permanently excluded any more than the Greek.

The result of these causes was that a rapid transition was effected from the "old speakers," the men of the time of the second Punic war and after, who, as Cicero \* says, "were unable to achieve a rounded period," to

\* *De Or.* III. 198.

orators like Crassus (140-90 B.C.) and Antonius (143-87 B.C.), in whom, in the opinion of the same writer,\* Latin eloquence first rose to the level attained by the Greeks.

Cato, already mentioned as the founder of Latin prose-writing, was the earliest orator of whom we can judge by specimens. Of the speeches which he delivered during his strenuous career and committed to writing in old age Cicero could read 150, and scanty fragments of some eighty still survive. He stood at the opening of the period under review, and was antagonistic to the changes which it brought. His definition of the orator as "a good man skilled in speaking" implies a protest against the rhetorical chicanery which could make the worse cause appear the better, and the advice which he gives to his son, "Stick to the matter and the words will come," † expresses the slight regard in which as a practical speaker he held the teaching of the schools. His speeches illustrate at once the soundness and the limitations of the latter admirable maxim. In his desire to make his meaning clear Cato multiplies synonyms and is not careful to avoid the recurrence of words of similar sound. He can be epigrammatic; indeed, the pointed style which almost throughout the history of Latin prose appears in contrast to the periodic style may be said to originate with Cato; but of cadenced phrase he has hardly a conception. Gellius justly observes of a passage which he quotes from Cato's speech about the Rhodians ‡ that it "could not

\* *Brutus*, § 138.

† *Rem tene verba sequentur*

‡ The passage may be translated "I know that when things are successful and plain-sailing and prosperous men's spirits grow rampant, that their arrogance and confidence gain and grow. And so because this affair has turned out so prosperously I am very anxious



have been expressed more forcibly or more vividly," but he says with equal justice that it "might have been expressed more artistically and more rhythmically." And yet Cato's sincerity stands him in good stead. Hear how he protests against the illegal execution of ten men of free birth by the proconsul Thermus: "Where are the rights of allies? where the promise of our forefathers? . . . What grief, what groans, what tears, what weeping did I hear!" Here strong feeling helps him to find utterance not merely effective, but harmonious

Cicero (*Brutus*, § 77-9) mentions fifteen of Cato's contemporaries as having some reputation as speakers; but the most highly praised is C. Sulpicius Gallus (*c.* 168 B.C.), the most enthusiastic Greek scholar of his day, whose oratorical style, he says, already showed a certain richness and brilliancy.\* In the two leaders of the Scipionic circle (Scipio, 185-129; Lælius, 186-122?) the effect of an eager study of Greek models is discernible in a more artistic manner of speech. Such a climax as Scipio's "Of innocence comes worth, of worth honour, of honour authority, of authority freedom,"† cannot be paralleled in the fragments of Cato, while the sentence‡ in which Lælius deplores the death of his distinguished friend, if somewhat clumsy, is elaborately constructed.

lest some disaster should happen to confound our prosperity, and lest this cheerfulness should turn out to be overdone Adversity trains us, and teaches us what we ought to do Prosperity is apt to turn men from the path of wise deliberation and calculation" (Gellius, *N. A.* vi. iii. 53. Quoted by Professor J. W. Duff.) One can imagine an Englishman speaking thus, with his hands in his pockets

\* *Iam enim erat citior quædam splendorque consuetudo loquendi* (Cic. *Brutus*, § 78).

† H. Meyer, *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta*

‡ Wordsworth, *Fragment and Specimens of Early Latin*, p. 353

An advance is marked in Servius Sulpicius Galba (b. 180 B.C.), infamous for his treacherous massacre of the Lusitanians. Though his speeches are pronounced more meagre and archaic than those of Scipio, Lælius, and even Cato, he is credited with having introduced the employment of rhetorical devices such as digressions, exaggerations, and the commonplace.\* More notable is Cicero's characterisation of M. Lepidus Porcina (b. about 180 B.C.) as the first Latin orator in whom appeared "the polish of the Greeks, the periodic structure of sentences, and what may be called an artistic style."† This statement, which we cannot verify by examples, receives confirmation from the fact that three of the most prominent orators of the Gracchan age were pupils of this Lepidus. In the case of the Gracchi the teaching of Porcina was supplemented by that of eminent Greek rhetoricians such as Diophanes of Mytilene and Menelaus Marathenus, and a fragment from a letter by his mother Cornelia suggests that Tiberius Gracchus owed the "pure and accurate diction"‡ with which Plutarch credits him to home teaching. Apart from this his "pleasing and pathetic eloquence"§ was the reflection of his own character.

But it was in Gaius Gracchus that the combined effect of rhetorical training and the stimulus of political excitement acting on great natural gifts was most conspicuously seen. With a vehemence which sometimes made him inarticulate—we hear it in his words "he has been murdered, my Tiberius, the best of brothers by the worst of men"—and a power of pathetic appeal which could draw tears from hostile listeners, he could be incisive and humorous, as in his vindication of his conduct as

\* Cic. *Brutus*, § 82.

† *Ibid.* § 95.

‡ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 2

§ *Ibid.*

quæstor,\* or tell a tale of magisterial oppression, as in his speech in favour of his legislative proposals (123 B.C.), with a simplicity which made no sacrifice of force.†

And yet though Cicero held that Gracchus had perhaps no superior in eloquence, he declares that his speeches lacked the finishing touch ‡

A third pupil of Porcina, G. Papirius Carbo, a shifty politician, and first the supporter and then the assailant of the Gracchan policy, had a fluent and sonorous style, and though unlearned in the law gained considerable reputation in the courts.

Other orators of Gracchan and Marian times are mentioned by Cicero. They do not, however, call for special notice, for none of them have left speeches behind them, and none of them can be said to mark a stage in the evolution of Roman oratory. We are struck by their number, and the completeness with which they became outclassed. For instance, the speech of C. Curio (pr. 122 B.C.) on behalf of a client accused of incest, which was accounted in its day "the very best" (*omnium optima*), is only referred to in the rhetorical manuals of forty years later as supplying an instance of puerile reasoning, while one of the interlocutors in Cicero's dialogue *Brutus* declared that it passed unnoticed among the crowd of speeches then accessible. It is otherwise with the two men whom, as mentioned above, Cicero pronounces the first Romans to rival the Greeks in eloquence.

M. Antonius (143-87 B.C.) and L. Licinius Crassus (140-

\* Gellius, 15, 12 "And so, citizens, having left Rome with a full purse, I have come back with an empty one. Others took out with them jars full of wine and have brought them home again filled with money."

† Gellius, 10, 3.

‡ Cic. *Brutus*, § 126.

91 B.C.), who were flourishing when Cicero was a boy, in many respects presented a contrast, the balance perhaps favouring Antonius as regards natural, Crassus as regards acquired excellences. With a marvellous memory Antonius combined a liveliness of imagination which made him skilful in constructing hypotheses and in exciting or allaying suspicion; Crassus, always well provided with arguments, excelled in interpretation, definition, exposition. In delivery, his strong point, Antonius was energetic—Cicero had seen him stoop while speaking till his knee touched the ground; Crassus' manner was more composed. Antonius was effective in plaintive appeal, a certain huskiness of voice being skilfully turned to account by him to enhance its pathos. Crassus could without loss of dignity give play to an urbane wit, and was effective in altercation. Antonius was at his best in the law courts, Crassus had an admirable platform and Senate-house style.

Of Antony's orations, once so successful, not a syllable remains—he would never write his speeches lest, as he said, they should be quoted against him—and of Crassus' utterances but little: a few witticisms, good enough to turn the laugh against an opponent, such as his remark that Memmius thought himself such a big man that he always ducked his head when passing under the Fabian arch, an echo of his "swan song" \* hurling defiance at a consul faithless to the Senate which it was his duty to defend, or the famous close of an earlier vindication of his order, then suffering from the persecution of Equestrian courts: "Rescue us from our miseries. Rescue us from the jaws of those men whose cruelty cannot be satiated by our life-blood. Forbid us to be in

\* *Cycnea vox* (*De Or.* iii 6)

bondage to any but to your united body; it is here possible and our duty." \*

Two orators of a younger generation, P. Sulpicius Rufus (121-88 B.C.) and C. Aurelius Cotta (124-74 B.C.), reproduced but did not equal the respective excellences of Antonius and Crassus, whom Cicero declares to have reached the highest perfection which it was possible for an orator not possessed of an all-round culture to attain.

Of the technical knowledge available to students at this stage in the history of eloquence an idea may be formed from the treatise addressed to Herennius,† which has a special interest as the earliest work in Latin prose which has come down to us entire. It is a complete if succinct handbook of rhetoric. Of its four books the first two and part of the third deal with the finding of arguments (*inventio*), the remainder of the third book with arrangement, delivery, and memory (*dispositio*, *pronuntiatio*, *memoria*), and the fourth with oratorical style (*elocutio*). The writer's aims are practical, for he ignores the minutiae dear to the Greek rhetoricians. Indeed, a sense of proportion prevents him from overrating the importance of rhetorical skill. "There are other and better objects in life," he says, "which we pursue with far more

\* *Eripite nos ex miseris, eripite ex faucibus eorum, quorum crudelitas nostro sanguine non potest expleri, nolite sinere nos cuiquam servire, nisi vobis universis, quibus et possumus et debemus* (Cic. *De Or.* 1 225). An attempt has been made to reproduce the precise rhythm of the closing words. They do not exhibit the cadence of any of Cicero's favourite *clausulae*. Cicero improved on his predecessors' treatment of the period. It may be noted that Crassus preferred to speak in brief sentences, especially affecting a system of broken sentences (*incisa*) followed by a short clause (*membrum*), summed up by a brief period (*comprehensio*), a system of which, correctly constructed, Cicero highly approved himself. Cic. *Orator* § 223.

† The author's name is not known. It was perhaps Cornificius

eagerness than this" A special feature of the book is that the writer as a rule constructs instead of citing his illustrations. The style is bald, and the unadorned sentences are awkwardly connected. Still it was doubtless a standard book in its day, and as such was freely excerpted by Cicero in the *De Inventione*, his earliest rhetorical treatise, written in 84 B.C., probably only a year after the publication of the work which he utilised.

Progress in other departments was less conspicuous than in the domain of oratory ; but it was nevertheless real and fruitful in results. Between the battle of Pydna (168 B.C.) and the death of Sulla (82 B.C.) the literary education of the Romans had been proceeding apace And it was being carried on by the Romans themselves as well as by the Greeks. If Crates of Mallus, the librarian of Attalus, King of Pergamus, detained at Rome by an accident about 169 B.C., had by his lectures given his hearers a deeper insight into the literature of Greece, the Romans, in the first instance, it is said, upon his suggestion, had begun the study of their own writers. These were read, commented on, and critically reviewed. Thus was Nævius treated by C. Octavius Lampadio, Ennius by Q. Vargunteus, and Lucilius by a Greek called Lælius Archelaus. Accius' metrical history of the drama, Greek and Roman (*Didascalica*), was followed by a work of the same character on Latin poets by Porcius Licinius (*circ.* 120 B.C.), and yet another by Volcatius Sedigitus (*fl. circ.* 90 B.C.), from which Gellius quotes thirteen iambic lines giving the writers of Græco-Roman comedy in order of merit. But more important than literary histories were the studies of scholars and grammarians, chief among them L. Ælius Stilo ("the penman"). This man, a Roman knight born about

154 B.C., lived long enough to give instruction to Cicero. His works included commentaries on the song of the Sali, the Twelve Tables, and the old Latin poets, of whom he produced critical editions. Doubtless he bore his part in that long controversy between Analogy and Anomaly which was the outcome of the effort to systematise the facts of the language and of the despair of systematisation induced by the difficulty of accommodating those facts to general principles. If the labours of the rhetoricians enhanced the flexibility of the language, those of the grammarians increased its precision, and it is largely due to the spadework done in various directions during this period that the archaism which is characteristic of the pre-Sullan literature almost disappears from that which was produced after Sulla's death.

More educative than either grammar or rhetoric was the influence of philosophy. Since the visit of three representatives of the three leading philosophical schools in 155 B.C. this influence had continued to operate with increasing effect on old as well as young. The crude scepticism of Euhemerus which had appealed to Ennius was replaced by the humanised Stoicism of Panætius, potent in the sphere of law, and the Academic doctrine that probability is the guide of life. Nor did Epicureanism lack followers.

In all these ways culture became more widely diffused among the ruling classes, and there grew up what had been lacking in the days when Greek freedmen set themselves to entertain their conquerors, a public which serious writers could address. Hence men of superior position took to authorship. Nor was it on this account alone that the estimation in which men of letters were held changed for the better: the age of revolution upset prejudices as well as convictions. Again the issue of the Social war

(90-88 B.C.) had its importance in the history of literature. It widened the public, brought new blood into the ranks of the authors, and decided once for all the victory of the Latin over the Oscan tongue. The above considerations help to explain how it was that the close of this period marks the transition to a new stage in the history of Latin literature. The Latin writers were beginning to find their feet. Translation and adaptation gave place to independent production under the inspiration of the Greeks, and the results of this production were to be not unworthy to challenge comparison with those of the more originaive nation.

For the rest, although the developments indicated were proceeding, apart from history, oratory, and the lighter drama, the literary production of the second half of the period 240-82 B.C. was not important. Technical works there were, such as the translation of the Carthaginian Mago's book on agriculture, the treatise by the Sasernæ, father and son, on the same subject, and in a different province the redaction of the civil law in eighteen books by Q. Mucius Scaevola, consul in 95 B.C. But poetry was poorly represented. HOSTIUS wrote an epic in hexameters on the Istrian war of 125 B.C., and A. FURIUS of Antium eleven books of metrical *Annales*, in which he came down to contemporary times, for a memoir on the exploits of his consulship addressed to him by Marius' colleague Catulus was probably intended to be utilised in this poem. Hostius and Furius were carrying on the tradition of Ennius, and a still earlier literary stratum may be traced in a few sepulchral inscriptions in Saturnians. But the "rude Saturnian rhythm," in Horace's phrase, was "ebbing" fast, and its use in a triumphal inscription by Mummius, the conqueror of Corinth, was



probably a piece of archaistic affectation. Yet the persistence of the older simplicity side by side with newer artistic developments may be further exemplified. There are sepulchral inscriptions which, though written in elegiacs or iambics, exhibit the terse directness of the earlier Scipionic epitaphs. Such are the elegiacs in which Cn. Cornelius Hispanus (*pr.* 139 B.C.) is made to record that he "begat offspring and ensued the deeds of his father,"\* or the naive iambics inscribed on the tomb of the second of the three great writers of tragedy :

*Youth, though thou haste, this stone doth thee request  
To look on it and what it hath to tell  
Marcus Pacuvius, poet, here hath rest ;  
I fain would have thee know it Fare thee well †*

Very different are the epigrams in which VALERIUS ÆDITUUS (*fl. circ.* 100 B.C.) complains that he cannot voice his passion for Pamphila, or Q. LUTATIUS CATULLUS (152-87 B.C.) declares that the beauty of the actor Roscius outshines the rising sun, or protests that his heart has playeddeserter and taken refuge in the breast of Theotimus. The latter epigram is based on one by Callimachus, and although the writer makes but an awkward attempt to reproduce Greek elegances and has the same difficulty in handling the pentameter which we shall find again in Catullus, it is important as indicating that the Roman litterateurs were beginning to turn their attention to that

\* *Progeniem genui, facta patris petier*

† *Adolescens, tametsi properas te hoc saxum rogat  
Ut sese aspicias deinde quod scriptum est legas  
Hic sunt poetæ Pacuvi Marci sita  
Ossa Hoc volebam nescius ne esses Vale*

GELLIUS, I, 24, 4

latter-day school of Greek literature which had its centre at Alexandria and is known as Alexandrine.

Still more strikingly is this tendency exemplified in the somewhat obscure poet LÆVIUS (*fl. circ. 90 B.C.*). His six books of love poems (*erotopœgna*) were written in a variety of metres, including scazon iambics, iambic dimeters, trochees, ionics, hendecasyllables. To judge by the fragments these productions were trifling enough. Lævius is even at pains to reproduce the Alexandrine trick of writing a poem in lines of varying length so arranged as to suggest the shape of some object \* (in a poem which we know him to have imitated it was a phoenix's wing); but as the laborious reproducer in Latin of Greek lyric metres he may perhaps dispute the title of the earliest Roman lyric poet with Catullus, who did not claim it, and Horace, who did.

\* Like the recital in *Alice in Wonderland*, which, meandering across the page in shortening lines and dwindling type, is intended to resemble the tail of a mouse.

## VI

### LUCRETIVS AND CATVLLVS

THE last stage of the Republic (82-43 B C) forms the first division of the culminating epoch of Latin literature, the second division (43 B C.-14 A D) being the Augustan age. But the literature of the late Republic differs markedly from that of the reign of Augustus. Less perfect and on the whole less mature, it exhibits more individuality and more vigour. The growth of individual independence and its substitution for the subordination of citizen to State was indeed not obscurely connected with the downfall of the republican form of government, and the desperate strife of personal ambitions which was its immediate cause was but one manifestation of an energy which was developed in many walks of life. The keenness of the political struggle accounts for another characteristic of the literature of the period, the predominance of prose over poetry. Although the conflict of individual aspirations which followed the overthrow of the Sullan restoration was eventually decided by the sword, yet up to the critical moment, and again in those few months when eloquence tried vainly to galvanise freedom into life, the influence exercised by the spoken word continued to be great. Again, though the members of the ruling class, with whom literary pursuits were now fashionable, might amuse themselves with verse, they were necessarily in the main preoccupied by public affairs,

and used prose as the medium for the serious expression of their opinions. History as well as oratory was enlisted in the service of politics. Yet the troubled nature of the times did not entirely check that industry of scholar and student which has been mentioned as characteristic of the period closed by the death of Sulla. Thus it is that while the traditions of an encyclopædist like Cato and a grammarian like Ælius Stilo were carried on by Varro, we find in the latter days of the Republic the first artistic historian in Sallust, the most lucid writer of military memoirs in Cæsar, and the consummator of Roman oratory in Cicero.

To this predominance of prose over poetry there are two notable exceptions, one a philosopher who stood aloof from politics, the other a man of pleasure to whom they meant but little. The first is an isolated figure, the second the most brilliant representative, indeed the only member whose works survive, of what was in his day the most fashionable school of poetry.

The philosophy of Epicurus, born at a time when Alexander and his successors had put an end to the autonomy of the Greek States, aimed at securing independence of circumstances and happiness for the individual. Pleasure, which he regarded as the highest good, he identified with a state of mind in which men should be free from care and fear (*ἀραπαξία*). Consistently with this view he bade his followers shun ambition and welcome obscurity. But above all he sought to release them from the fear of death, which he conceived as due to the superstitious fear of what might follow death. Adopting the atomic theory originated by Leucippus and developed by Democritus, he maintained that the universe was automatic and material, thus

excluding the interference of gods in human affairs and the continued existence of the soul after death. In order to make the attainment of happiness in this limited existence more secure Epicurus recommended the restriction of the desires to such pleasures as are commonly accessible,\* while to replace in some measure the element of ideality which he had banished from the world he laid particular stress on the exercise of benevolence and the cultivation of friendship.

Such were the main features of Epicureanism. It had become known to the Romans at the same time as the philosophy of the Stoics, and, like the latter, it appealed to them as being susceptible of practical application to life. The text "Pleasure the end" was one of general attractiveness and liberal interpretation, and there can be no doubt that in the last century of the Republic it was widely practised if not widely professed.

But among all the disciples of Epicurus there can have been none more ardent, none more thoroughly convinced, than TITUS LUCRETIVS CARUS. In diagnosing the ills of life as traceable to the fear of death, and the fear of death to superstition, he held that the Greek philosopher was the true physician of the world. If Lucretius overrated the fear of death as an influence in human life, we, on the other hand, are perhaps inclined to under-estimate the power of superstition in the latter half of the seventh century of Rome. Roman religion was based on fear, and this was an element which was likely to persist when much else was discarded. The fact that human sacrifices were still not unknown and that priestcraft was a powerful engine in the hands of politicians shows that scepticism did not by any means exclude superstition. Be this as it

\* *Neque enim est unquam penuria parvi.* Lucretius, v. 1119.

may, the motive with which Lucretius set out to expound the philosophy of Epicurus was the desire to "drive forth the fear of Acheron neck and crop."

Other writers there were, Amafinius, Rabirius, Catus, whether earlier or later by a few years than Lucretius we cannot tell, who treated the system—inadequately, according to Cicero—in prose \* But Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, a didactic poem in hexameters, is the only complete poetic exposition of this or any other philosophy which we possess

True to his master's teaching, Lucretius lived and died unknown. At any rate this is so as far as we are concerned. The only information given about him by any ancient writer is contained in a sentence of the chronicle of St. Jerome (*circa* A.D. 400), which notes under the year 94 B.C. : "Birth of the poet Titus Lucretius : later, having been driven mad by a love-philtre, after he had written in the intervals of his mental ailment several books which Cicero subsequently corrected, he died by his own hand in his forty-fourth year."

The chronology has been called in question. Implying as it does that the poet died in 51 B.C., it is contradicted by a statement made by Donatus in his life of Vergil to the effect that he died in the year in which Vergil assumed the garb of manhood—that is to say, in 55 B.C. If we prefer the authority of Donatus to that of Jerome, but adhere to the statement of the latter as to the duration of Lucretius' life, it may be concluded that it extended from 99 to 55 B.C.

\* The hexameter poem by Egnatius Celer *De Rerum Natura* was probably later than Lucretius' work There was also a book called *Empedoclea*, by Sallustius—whether identical with the historian or not is uncertain.

The story of the love philtre, which has supplied the framework of Tennyson's poem *Lucretius*, has been regarded with even greater scepticism. It has been conjectured that it was an invention of Christian writers, who may have thought that such an end was at any rate eminently suited to the deserts of so irreligious a writer.\* Again, it is difficult to believe that a work characterised by such close and continuous reasoning as the *De Rerum Natura* could have been written in the intervals of insanity. Such gaps and repetitions as are observable in the poem are sufficiently explained by the fact, rendered certain by its abrupt conclusion, that it never received the author's finishing touch. On the other hand, the story of the love-philtre, although startling to us, may yet be true. The use of such injurious decoctions may be illustrated by the literature of the time, and was provided against by legislation, and if Jerome was here using a life of Lucretius probably prefixed by Valerius Probus (A.D. 35-95) to his edition of the poet, or, as he constantly does, the lives of distinguished men (*De Viris Illustribus*) by Suetonius (A.D. 75-160), the theory of Christian invention which has been suggested to account for it falls to the ground. A slight transposition of Jerome's words proposed by an Italian scholar † has the effect of

It is noted by J. D. Duff, to whom, in his lucid introductions to Lucretius, Books III and V., I am indebted, as well as to Munro, Giussani, and Masson, that Lucian, another Epicurean heretic, is stated to have been torn to pieces by dogs—an invention.

† Stampini, *Il suicidio di Lucrezio*, cited by Masson, *Lucretius, Epicurean and Poet*, 1 45 He would make the words run. "Afterwards, when, during the intervals of his nervous ailment, he had written several books which were subsequently corrected by Cicero, he was driven to madness by a love-philtre, and killed himself by his own hand."

making him say that the mental affection (*insania*) from which Lucretius suffered was distinct from and anterior to the frenzy (*furor*) which drove him to suicide. Presented in this form, the statement of Jerome becomes easier to accept. Although the character of Lucretius' work forbids us to suppose that it was written in the intervals of actual madness, yet apart from its pessimism it does exhibit throughout a certain tension of mind which, taken in conjunction with definite passages implying that the writer had personal experience of waking visions, at least lends support to the statement that he suffered from some malady of the nerves. And yet, when all has been said, there must be many who will think it wiser to leave the sentence of Jerome untouched, and to regard its contents as suspect.

It is otherwise with the statement that Lucretius' work was after his death "corrected," which is generally taken to mean revised for publication, by Cicero. That it was subjected to some sort of revision by M. Tullius Cicero (Jerome must surely mean the more famous of the brothers) receives countenance from the fact that, left unfinished at the poet's death, it was being discussed in correspondence by Marcus and Quintus Cicero a very few months after that event.\* And this view gains further support from the statement in a recently discovered life

\* Cicero, *Epp. ad Q. F.* II. II. Cicero's criticism on the *De Rerum Natura*—*Lucreti poemata ut scribis ita sunt multis luminibus ingeni, multæ tamen artis*—if the text is sound, probably bears the meaning given to the words by Mr E S Shuckburgh, i.e., "often brilliant, but highly technical." If alteration be required, *non* should be inserted before *multæ*, and Cicero must be understood as qualifying his admiration for Lucretius' natural genius by a reference to an archaism and rudeness of versification which was in contrast with the smoothness of the modern school.



of Lucretius, compiled by a fifteenth-century scholar,\* but in the opinion of good judges † quite possibly drawn from ancient and trustworthy sources, that Lucretius used to show his poems to Cicero when fresh from his pen, and allowed himself to be guided by his criticisms, some of which were directed against the boldness of his metaphors. There is nothing impossible in this, for if Lucretius was acquainted, as he may well have been, with the Epicurean Atticus he can hardly have failed to be known to Atticus' most intimate friend.

To turn from biographical questions to Lucretius' work itself. Employing the form used by Empedocles, who had written a poem about Nature (*περὶ φύσεως*) in hexameter verse, Lucretius expounded the system of Epicurus, whose doctrines were embodied in a prose work bearing the same title as that of Empedocles, and also in popular summaries intended to make them accessible to the widest possible circle.

The *De Rerum Natura* opens with an invocation to Venus, whom the poet asks to give help to himself in his task and peace to his country. In thus addressing Venus Lucretius is not deliberately stultifying his conviction that the gods take no part in the affairs of men. Under the name of Venus he symbolises the birth-giving power in Nature (*cf.* iv 1058), and we have here only a salient example of a tendency to which Lucretius is liable, to speak of Nature, the earth, the sky, and, indeed, the atoms themselves, as if they were endowed with life. A special motive for the personification lies in the fact that Venus was the patron goddess of the family of C. Memmius, to

\* Girolamo Borgia, who probably used notes by his master Pontanus. J. Masson, *Epicurean and Poet*, i 38 ff, and ii. 1-13.

† Professor J. S. Reid, Masson, *l.c.*

whom he proceeds to dedicate his work. Memmius was the man who, as governor of Bithynia, earned, as we shall see, the contempt of Catullus. Prætor-elect at the time referred to in the dedication, if, as is probable, this was the year of Cæsar's consulship (59 B.C),\* he was a member of the senatorial party, and Lucretius writes as though at this critical juncture he were a pillar of the State. Subsequently he deserted to the democratic party, was detected (54 B.C) in a scandalous compact entered into with a view to securing his election to the consulship, convicted of bribery, and driven into exile. This, however, was after Lucretius' death. The poet writes as if he hoped to convert Memmius to Epicureanism. If such was his hope it was not realised, for the latter at one time actually contemplated pulling down the house of Epicurus at Athens, which had come into his possession, and Cicero, writing to try to persuade him to make it over to the Epicureans, finds it diplomatic to allude to the sect in slighting terms

The first book contains an answer to the question, "Of what does the universe consist?" The answer is, atoms and void. Both are described. Atoms are solid, indestructible and invisible. They are also infinite in number, as is space in extent. At the close of the book the systems of other philosophers, notably Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras, are considered and refuted.

How do atoms make the universe? This is the problem raised and solved in the second book. It describes the movement of atoms falling endlessly through space at an equal speed, yet capable of a lateral movement

\* Munro on Lucretius, i 41. It has been suggested more recently that the invocation to Venus was added to the poem as late as 55 B.C. J. Wight Duff, *Literary History of Rome*, p. 281, note

(*clinamen*, Greek *παρέγκλισις*), which renders it possible for these to collide and cohere. Atoms are of different shapes, a circumstance which accounts for the differing properties of substances ; but the number of shapes, though large, is not infinite. From the combination of atoms arise the secondary properties, such as colour, heat, and smell.

In the third book Lucretius deals with a vital part of his subject, the soul (*anima*). This too is material. It consists of atoms which are very small, smooth, and round. Only thus can we account for the swiftness of thought. Nor is it homogeneous. Its ingredients are wind (*ventus*—i.e., air in motion), heat (*calor* or *vapor*), air (*aer*—i.e., air at rest), or strictly speaking atoms possessing in combination these characteristics, and atoms yet more subtle of a fourth, nameless substance, by which alone sensation is initiated. All these atoms are clustered more thickly in the region of the breast, where especially mind (*animus*—i.e., the rational element in the soul) exercises its functions, more sparsely through the rest of the body, the sphere more particularly of *anima*, the irrational element in the soul (which, following Lucretius, we must again call "soul"), though not so sparsely but that any but the smallest objects impinging on the body must touch some atoms of the nameless substance, and thus give rise to sensation in the body, than which the irrational element exercises no higher function. It will thus be seen that *animus* and *anima* represent aspects or functions rather than parts of the *anima*, \* Lucretius does not emphasise the distinction between them—in fact, he gives notice (l. 421) that he uses the terms as synonyms.

This description of the constitution of the soul is

\* III 258-265. Vide Giussani, *ad loc.*

followed by a long series of arguments intended to prove that it cannot survive the death of the body, and did not exist before it.

Having reached the conclusion that the soul is mortal, Lucretius draws the moral. Death, which ends all, is not to be feared. Live calmly, not snatching irrationally at pleasure; when the time comes retire from life with equanimity.

A connection between the fourth book with the preceding is supplied at the opening of the latter (l. 26). If the soul ends at death, whence the belief in ghosts? The answer given is that all objects are incessantly throwing off films from their surface. On this theory of emanations Lucretius proceeds to explain the operation of the senses, sight, hearing, taste, and smell. Sight, for example, is explained as caused by the impact of a succession of films from the object seen upon the eye. Touch is not treated separately, being implied in the operations of the other senses, though it is also brought into play by direct contact, as is indeed normally the case with taste. The infallibility of the senses is maintained, such errors as may arise being attributed to false inferences drawn by the mind from the indications of sense. Thought and volition are explained in the same way. There is no thought without an image. But the process is facilitated on the theory that the mind can perceive far finer images than the senses, and a single image is enough to make thought possible. What then becomes of free will? It is maintained on the supposition that the mind selects from the inconceivably large number of images always available. The same explanation is given of the phenomena of dreams. This subject introduces that of love, which is explained physiologically and represented as not divine,

but rather as an influence to be shunned or kept under control.

The fifth book sets forth the origin of the world, of life, and of human society. For the world was not made by gods and will not last for ever. It took shape, after long confusion, through the segregation of similar atoms. Earth sank, and ether rose like mist above a pool, while midway floated sun and moon. Water settled in the hollow places of earth, which, buffeted by atoms, became ever denser as the salt sweat was squeezed out of it. After accounting for the movement of the stars by the hypothesis of air currents Lucretius discusses the size, motions, and eclipses of sun and moon. Then he passes to the beginning of life. Vegetation grew on the earth as hairs and bristles on four-footed creatures, and out of the earth (rightly called mother) grew bird and beast and man. Afterwards, like a woman worn out by length of days, she ceased, and since then life is carried on by other processes. Some species unfitted to survive have died out, and some, for reasons which we can perceive, still persist. But creatures of double nature, such as Centaurs and Scyllas, never could exist and never did. The rest of the book traces the course of human development, how primitive men lived like the beasts, and how civilisation began with the softening influences of wedlock. It sets forth the origin of speech, language arising naturally and not being established by arbitrary creation, the discovery of fire, due to lightning or the friction of crossing boughs, and the beginnings of political life. Those who excelled in intellect indicated improvements and ruled as kings. The discovery of gold gave power to the rich and also caused ambition. So kings fell before the rabble, but disorder becoming intolerable codes of law were made.

The origin of religion is next described. Men saw images of glorious forms, and credited them with immortality, happiness, and control of the world, of which they perceived the orderly operations. The grievous error was kept alive by the fears of men and their impotence in the face of great disasters. Then follow the discoveries of metals, weapons and methods of warfare, dress and music, until complete civilisation is attained.

The sixth book contains explanations of various natural phenomena: thunder, lightning, waterspouts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, the rising of the Nile, the deadly atmosphere of certain places called "Avernian," the spring of Ammon, cold by day and hot by night, the magnet, and finally disease, which subject is illustrated by a description of the plague at Athens. The explanations given do not all necessarily involve the doctrine of atoms, thunder and earthquakes, for instance, being attributed to the agency of air-currents, aerial or subterranean. Alternative explanations are sometimes given, but celestial agency is excluded; thunderbolts are not hurled by gods, nor are "Avernian places" mouths of hell.

Such is a brief indication of the subjects of the six books. It will be seen that they fall into three pairs, dealing respectively with atoms and the movements of atoms, soul and the functions of the soul (summed up in sensation), the universe (including human society) and some at least of the phenomena of the universe. Looking at the books from a slightly different point of view, one may say that in the first two the fundamental principles of Epicurean physics are expounded, and that in the remaining four they are applied. Of the three divisions of the Epicurean philosophy. "canonic," physics, and ethics, only one, physics, is treated

systematically. The principles of Epicurus' canonic—that part of his system which sought to establish that the senses provide the criterion of truth—are only incidentally referred to and are assumed as true. For instance, almost at the opening of the work (l. 422) Lucretius appeals to the senses as evidencing the existence of matter, and observes that unless this evidence be accepted as to things seen any reasoning about things unseen will be impossible. The subject is referred to at greater length in the fourth book, where Lucretius is discussing the sense of sight. Optical delusions are declared to be due to false inferences drawn by the mind from true indications given by the senses. The man who maintains that nothing can be known is challenged to admit that his knowledge of the difference between knowing and not knowing has originated with the senses. Lucretius continues: "In fact not only would all reason give way; life itself would at once collapse unless you choose to trust to the senses."

Ethics, again, are not treated consecutively; different points are dwelt on in the introductions to the books or considered as practical inferences from conclusions arrived at in the reasonings about physics. Thus at the opening of the second book, in which the serenity of the wise is lauded and the blindness of ambition deplored, Lucretius follows up a description of a banquet by night, amid all the splendour of lamps reflected from golden statues and all the witchery of music, with a picture of the simple life. Nature, he says, does not require these things:

*While still on mossy banks in groups reclined  
Beside a stream, beneath a tall tree's shade,  
At little cost men find refreshment sweet  
But most when skies are kind, and meadows green  
Are sprent with blossoms in their season due*

But the most striking passage in which the relation of the physics of Epicurus to his ethics is brought out is in the third book, where, after a series of some eight-and-twenty reasons adduced to prove that the soul did not exist before and cannot survive the body, Lucretius triumphantly announces the conclusion, "Death then is nought to us, and matters not a jot," and proceeds to develop its full significance. After death we shall be as completely unconscious as we were before we were born. There is nothing to fear about it. If it deprives us of many blessings we shall no longer desire them. Justly might Nature rebuke her children for their repining, point out to them that life is after all a gift, and ask them why they do not retire like satisfied guests when it is over; or if they dislike it why they do not end it:

*Nothing besides can I contrive or find  
To please thee Always all things are the same.*

iii. 944-5.

As for the fabled terrors of Acheron, they do but typify the passions of the living—Tantalus their superstitious fears, Tityos their torments of remorse or love, Sisyphus their ambition, the Danaids their unsatisfied desires. He who rebels at death may reflect that better men than he have had to submit thereto, kings such as Ancus, generals such as Scipio, of poets Homer, of sages Democritus, and even Epicurus himself. Excessive love of life is the cause of the restless *ennui* of the day, and philosophy its only cure.

That Lucretius added anything to the system of Epicurus is unlikely, though here and there he modified, at least in statement, the crudeness of its prudential morality. But the setting of the argument, the introductions to the books, and much, probably, of their wealth



of confirmatory illustration were his own.\* Above all, whereas Epicurus despised style, Lucretius, his aspiration realised, has set forth "the dark discoveries of the Greeks" in "lucid verse" and touched all with "an undying charm."

It has been said that the subject of Lucretius' poem, involving as it does continuous reasoning and often technical phraseology or prosaic detail, is unsuitable for poetic treatment. This is true. A succession of arguments linked by recurrent formulæ of connection ("furthermore," "for the rest," and the like) can hardly fail to prove monotonous. And yet such is the intrinsic importance of the topics treated, such the writer's adequacy to deal with them, such his enthusiasm, his imaginative power, in a word his genius, that he has left in the *De Rerum Natura* the most impressive poem in the Latin language. As Lucretius claims, he "gives instruction on great matters." Indeed, they comprise nothing less than the sum of things. And if the explanation of the universe given by Epicurus is not now accepted, if his theory of the mechanical combination of atoms has been supplemented and modified by knowledge of the laws of chemical change, while recently the phenomena of radio-activity have shown us atoms themselves which Lucretius pronounced "mighty through their eternal singleness" in process of dissolution, none the less that way of conceiving the universe which he expounds is so fundamental that it stands for more than an interesting stage in the history of science. Of more general appeal than the exposition of the atomic system is the account of the

\* Here is a clear case. When Lucretius (vi 109) seeks to explain the noise of thunder by the analogy of the flapping of canvas awnings stretched over the amphitheatre he is referring to an appliance first used in 60 B.C.

evolution of society in the fifth book, while the poem throughout presents the age-long controversy between religion and science in an acute form.

To these great subjects Lucretius is entirely equal. His largeness of view enables him to embrace the whole, while his vivid imagination gives him power to move easily in regions beyond human ken. In the words which he uses of his master Epicurus :

*By living force victorious he passed  
Beyond the flaming ramparts of the world,  
And ranged in thought the illimitable all*

1 72-4.

Lucretius' enthusiasm is all-pervading. It extends to the driest details of his argument. So far from finding his labour irksome, he more than once proclaims that it is a delight. What is more, he enlivens these details by constant references to the world of Nature—references which are not merely ornamental, but strictly germane to the argument. His comparison of the movements of atoms with the dance of motes in a sunbeam may be cited as an example of his aptitude for suggestive analogy, and in the graphic examples he gives of operations unseen except in their results—the pressure of wind upon the sail, the wearing away of a ring upon the finger, the drying of garments suspended in the sun—analogy attains to the dignity of argument. Equally telling are the instances he adduces to show the compatibility of ceaseless motion on the part of the atoms with the apparent rest of the bodies which they compose. Thus, after vividly describing the rapid, ceaseless, and intricate movements of manœuvring troops he continues :

*High in the hills you yet shall find a place  
Whence viewed they do not seem to move at all,  
But rest, a gleam of light, upon the plain.*

11. 331-2

The power of observation here displayed and the simplicity of the language remind us of Wordsworth.

Lucretius has an imagination which enables him to visualise the unseen. He can discern in thought—it is what he apprehends would happen were atoms not infinite in number—the void strewn for an instant with the dissipating wreckage of the world \* He can project upon his mental retina the figure of superstition lowering upon mortals with terrible aspect,† as vividly as he can see “faces of black horror” bent earthwards from veritable thunder-clouds.‡ He can draw a picture of Venus in the embrace of Mars so plastic that it has been held to be a reminiscence of some sculptured group,§ and describe the procession of the seasons in language which hardly needed that Botticelli should give it form and colour in his picture of the spring || But above all he sees clearly and describes directly the actual aspects and operations of Nature :

*The rushing streams,  
The leafy homes of birds and verdant plains*  
1. 17-18.

He has an eye for the shells that

*Punt the breast of earth  
Where'er the sea with gently lapping waves  
Beats on the porous sand of curving shores.*

11 374-6

Nor does he fail to mark how

*Clouds lightly gather high aloft, and stain  
The heaven's bright face and moving fan the air*

14 136-8.

Once again attention may be drawn to the unadorned simplicity with which Lucretius lets the facts speak for themselves. There are passages which are highly finished, like the magnificent exordium with its eulogy of the life-

\* 11 551-64    † 1 64    ‡ 14 173    § 2 33.    || 5 737-40

giving power in the universe, or the closing episode in which he developed, with perhaps excessive elaboration of Thucydides' description of the plague at Athens, an appalling picture of death triumphant. But even here his language is simple and direct. It is energy, not ornament, which makes it tell, and it is the energy of a score of unforgettable phrases—"the flaming ramparts of the world," "the serene strongholds of the wise," "the shining shafts of day," "the solemn fires of night"—which to any one who has read Lucretius' poem makes them uniquely characteristic of their originator. The consciousness of man's nothingness in the face of inexorable law fills Lucretius' utterances with a profound solemnity. And, indeed, his outlook on life is serious, and even melancholy.

*Mingling with death there sounds  
The wail of infants, as they first behold  
The fringes of the light, nor ever yet  
Night followed day, nor morning night, but heard  
Blent with weak cries of babes the loud lament  
That waits on death and dark funereal fires †*

With this seriousness a keen moral insight unites to make Lucretius the most effective of moralists. Shrewdly he says, if you would know what men really think mark them when danger threatens.

*Then only truth is forced from inmost hearts,  
The mask is torn away, remains the fact.†*

† *Miscetur funere vagor  
Quem pueri tollunt viscentes luminis oras  
Nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secutast  
Quæ non audierit mixtos vagitibus ægris,  
Ploratus mortis comites et funeris atræ.*

II. 576-80.

† *Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo  
Eiciuntur, et eripitur persona, manet res.*

III. 57.

*Out of the very fountain of delight  
Rises a bitterness.\**

The words describe the misgivings which may beset the lover, but if they are familiar it is because of the deep knowledge of universal experience which they embody. This moral insight is seconded by a keen and subtle observation. Whether he be stripping the romance from the secular passion of love or analysing the restless *ennui* of ever-gratified desires which was one of the peculiar maladies of his age, Lucretius shows himself a satirist less forced but more forcible than Juvenal himself. Here is the original of Matthew Arnold's "Roman noble" in *Obermann Once More*:

*Forth to his country house he drives his team  
Full tilt you'd think him all agog to save  
A house on fire, but let him reach the door,  
He yawns, falls heavily asleep, to find  
Forgetfulness—or e'en hastes back to town †*

Yet his satire is born, not of malice, but of pity. He is distressed by the waste of life.

*O hapless minds of men, O blinded hearts !  
Amidst what gloom, what perils fraught with Death  
Our little life is passed !*

II 14, 15

He sees men terrified like children in the dark by imaginary fears or tossing on seas of error, and he desires

*Medio de fonte leporum  
Surgit amari aliquid*

IV 1133

† *Currit, agens mannos ad villam præcipitanter  
Auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans,  
Oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villæ,  
Aut abiit in somnum gravis atque oblivæ quærit  
Aut etiam proferans urbem putat atque revisit.*

III. 1065

to hold up a bright light in the gloom and guide them to the "serene strongholds of the wise."

It is remarkable that with all his veneration for his great teachers, and despite the eager desire he expresses for the "sweet friendship" of the unworthy recipient of his poem, the one point in the Epicurean philosophy on which Lucretius omits to enlarge is the cultivation of friendship. A similar isolation is observable in his position as a writer. He stands alone, and turns his back on the literary currents of his age. In the structure of his hexameter, although, as Munro has observed, he was a far more finished versifier than his model, Lucretius followed Ennius. Not only in the movement of his verse, but in his fondness for alliteration, in his use of asyndeton, and his freedom in forming compound words Lucretius is perhaps deliberately archaic. And it will be observed that in every point which can be specified as characteristic of either Lucretius presents an exact antithesis to the rising school of poets.

As the employer of a variety of lyrical metres we have already seen a pioneer of Alexandrinism in Lævius, a poet of the time of Sulla. But metrical elaboration was only one of the characteristics of Alexandrine literature, although it was typical of them all. For the note of it was learning. Fostered in an erudite environment, the Museum and the Library of the Egyptian Ptolemies, it sought to replace the freshness which the language had lost by artificiality of diction, and to eke out the poverty of material due to the loss of political independence and the decay of conviction by treating unfamiliar subjects with a wealth of mythological allusion. A critical habit combined with want of fertility in recommending the avoidance of long works. Epic poetry was eschewed,

except, indeed, in the modified form in which it was revived by Apollonius of Rhodes, and his quarrel with Callimachus, author of the dictum that "a great book is a great nuisance," while largely personal may be in part explained as a controversy between epicist and elegist. On the other hand, a sentimentality born of empty days and a certain romanticism, perhaps rightly connected with the prevalence of feminine influences at the Egyptian court, encouraged the production of erotic elegy, while the thin vein of inspiration which was unequal to longer flights of song found congenial expression in epigram and occasional poem.

Such were the main features of the literature which in the last half-century of the Republic and the first of the Empire produced marked effects on Roman poetry. The reason why its influence began to operate now are not far to seek. It was the literature in vogue in the provinces into which the kingdoms of Alexander's successors had, with the exception of Egypt, been formed, and Greek teachers were now coming from these provinces to Rome, and Romans of the educated classes visiting them in increased numbers. The extension of Roman rule had brought the Greek and Roman nationalities, long sundered, into such close contact that it was natural that the Romans should set themselves to rival the current Greek literature rather than look back to the ancient models. Moreover, from their cosmopolitan tone the productions of the Alexandrines were more readily imitable than those of the old Greek writers, with their strong local or national associations. It is possible, too, as Mommsen suggests, that the widening of Italy by the Social war and subsequent developments, in consequence of which Roman literature became less exclusively the

expression of the ideas and traditions of Latium, may help to account for the welcome given to the denationalised literature of Hellenism.

Of the Greek teachers to whom reference has been made, perhaps the most influential, though not by any means the first, was Parthenius of Nicæa, a well-known elegist who came to Rome about 73 B.C., and there set up a school of literature. But a yet more commanding position was occupied by Valerius Cato, a native of Cisalpine Gaul (b. about 100 B.C.), who wrote poetry in the Alexandrine manner, and taught it on Alexandrine principles at Rome. The words of an enthusiastic pupil imply that he exercised a kind of literary dictatorship :

*Cato, teacher of letters, Latin Siren,  
Sole expounder of poets—and creator.\**

As the master, so the pupils—at least the majority of them—hailed from Cisalpine Gaul. If the birthplaces of C. Licinius Calvus (82–47 B.C.), Memmius (prætor 57 B.C.)—for he too has been reckoned among the Roman Alexandrines—and Tigidas are unknown, Valerius Catullus (84–54 B.C.) was born at Verona, his friend Cæcilius at Comum, M. Furius Bibaculus (83–24 B.C.) at Cremona, C. Helvius Cinna (d. 44) and Cornificius somewhere in the Transpadane region, while P. Terentius Varro derived his surname, Atacinus, from the river Atax (Aude), in Narbonensian Gaul. Successful claimants during this period for full political equality, the Transpadanes were in fact making good a similar claim in the world of letters.

With one notable exception the Roman Alexandrines have left hardly anything behind them. But it is evident

*\* Cato grammaticus, Latina Siren,  
Qui solus legit ac facit poetas*

M. FURIUS BIBACULUS



that in choice of subject and in treatment they reproduced the features of the writers whom they studied. The little epic appears, for instance, in the *Io* of Calvus, the *Glaucus* of Tícidas, and the *Zmyrna* \* of Cinna. The last work is a typical example of its class. Although it was of no great length it occupied its author for nine years, and, thanks to its obscurity and the abstruseness of its mythology, called for elucidation by commentators of the Augustan age. Cato's *Lydia* and Tícidas' *Perilla* were seemingly collections of erotic elegies grouped round a central figure. With the former Ovid compares the work of Catullus' friend Cornificius, and the epithet "light" † by which he characterises it implies its erotic character. Slightly different in tone must have been the elegy or elegies bearing her name in which Calvus deplored the death of his wife Quintilia.

Among occasional poems may be mentioned the farewell (*προπεμπτικόν*) which Cinna addressed to Asinius Pollio on his departure for a tour in Greece, while Calvus composed a bridal serenade (*epithalamium*), and a fragment survives of a processional marriage hymn (*hymenæus*) in the glyconic metre written by Tícidas. Epigrams were produced by Cinna, Calvus, and others, and iambics, referred to by Tacitus ‡ as full of abuse of Cæsar and Octavian, by M. Furius Bibaculus. As for didactic poetry, the work of Calvus on the use of cold water may have been in

\* The prettiness of the only two consecutive surviving lines,

*Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous*

*Et flentem paullo vidit post Hesperus idem,*

is reproduced in Tennyson's *Mariana*, "Her tears fell with the dews at eve," &c

| *Et leve Cornifici parque Catonis opus* Ov. *Tr.* 2, 426

‡ Tacitus, *Annals*, 4, 34

poetry or prose. In translating the *Phænomena* of Aratus in early youth, followed later by a version of his *Prognostica*, Cicero was guided by the fashion of the day in his choice of subject. But he was prevented from being Alexandrine in manner and diction by his admiration for the old Latin poets, between whom and Lucretius, who imitated him, he supplies a link. This hesitation between the earlier and the later poetical schools is seen more clearly in Varro of Atax. While on the one hand he produced an epic poem after the Ennian method on Cæsar's campaign against the Sequani, and made an experiment, which his successor Horace pronounced unsuccessful, in the field of satire, on the other he was the author of an Alexandrine *epyllion* about the Argonauts after Apollonius Rhodius, a geographical work (*chorographia*) based on one by Alexander of Ephesus, a poem on weather signs (*ephemeris*) imitating Aratus, and a collection of elegiac poems bearing the title *Leucadia*. That Varro was versatile is shown by the variety of his subjects, that he was a skilful versifier is evidenced by the single line—for such it is in the original—which tells how

*The cold North wind  
Has shaken down the glory of the woods \**

But by far the most distinguished representative of the school was C. VALERIUS CATULLUS. His intimate friend C. LICINIUS CALVUS (82-47 B.C.), who is often associated with him, gave more attention to oratory than to poetry, and of his poems the merest fragments survive. And yet to speak of Catullus as the representative of the Alexandrine school is misleading. For in inspiration if not in technique he owed more to the early Greek lyric poets than to the Alexandrines, and the high place which he

\* *Frigidus in silvis Aquilo decussit honorem*

occupies among the great poets of the world is due to the fact that his poems are above all the expression of his own individuality. Born, as mentioned above, at Verona in the year 84 B.C.,\* and a member of a provincial family of means and position, Catullus came to Rome early in life. The motive which brought him thither may have been literary ambition, for he was already a poet, having, as he tells a friend (c. 68a. 17), begun to write love poems when he was about fifteen,† and it is possible that he came as the *protégé* of Cornelius Nepos, a Transpadane like himself, to whom (c. 2) he afterwards dedicated a collection of his lyric poems‡ He must have studied enough to acquire a considerable knowledge of Greek poetry, and while associating chiefly with literary contemporaries such as Cinna and Calvus he became known to men of established fame like Hortensius and Cicero. But it was life which occupied him rather than learning, and a passion which he conceived for Clodia, sister of Cicero's enemy and wife of Q. Metellus Celer, now (62 B.C.) governor of Cisalpine Gaul, inspired a series of lyrics which have made his name famous.

The poems of Catullus are not arranged in chronological order. Of the 116 pieces which we possess the

\* St. Jerome says that Catullus was born in 87 B.C. and lived thirty years—i.e., till 57 B.C. But as some of his poems certainly belong to the year 55 B.C. or the beginning of 54 B.C. we have the alternative of dating the poet's life 87-54 or 84-54.

† The poems about Aufilena (100, 110, 111) may be some of these, but they may be later, the attack in Priapeans on a husband who fails to appreciate a charming wife and the elegiacs about Verona scandals (67) may be reckoned among them with more confidence.

‡ Not coextensive with the whole existing collection, but perhaps comprising the earlier lyrics which centre round Lesbia. There was such a collection bearing (with reference to C. 2) the title *Passer*

short lyrical pieces have been placed first; then come the longer poems, eight in number, in lyric metres, hexameters and elegiacs, and finally forty-eight short poems and epigrams in elegiacs. Nor within these divisions are the poems placed in order of time. It is therefore not possible to date the several poems of the series referred to with certainty, and it will be enough here to indicate the successive phases which Catullus' attachment assumed

The dawning of his passion he confessed in a translation (c. 51) of the ode in which Sappho depicted the divine exaltation, the overpowering faintness experienced by the lover in the presence of the beloved, and it was probably with some reference to this initial poem that in the series by which it was followed Catullus gives Clodia the pseudonym of "lady of Lesbos" (*Lesbia*). The lovers—for Catullus' passion was reciprocated—met at a house which the poet's friend Allius (c. 68 a. 28) placed at their disposal, and the first and happiest phase of their attachment is reflected in those unique lyrics in which Catullus celebrates (c. 2), and deplores the death of (c. 3), his mistress's pet sparrow, pleads that they should enjoy their love to the full while they might (c. 5), or protests that to content him he must have kisses past counting (c. 7). Two more poems belong to this time. In one of them (c. 43) he declares that *Lesbia* defies comparison. In the other (c. 86) he protests that she has stolen all the graces from all other maidens and combined them in herself.

But the happiness which these poems reflect was short-lived. Clodia was not the woman to be contented with a single admirer, and Catullus' "piping" soon "took a troubled note." Efforts he made to assert his

independence, still fancying that he was Clodia's only serious flame (c. 8), nor were such efforts altogether in vain. There was a day when Lesbia unexpectedly returned to her slighted lover (c. 107). Light-heartedly does he commemorate (c. 36) how Lesbia had vowed to burn the dreary annals of the poetaster Volusius should her lover's resentment be appeased, and how the vow was kept. But reconciliation could not make things as they were, and a tone cynical (c. 70)—"women's promises," he says, "are writ in water"—and guarded (c. 109) replaces the ecstasies of earlier days.

The death of Metellus in 59 B.C. did not mend matters for Catullus. On the contrary, the conduct of Clodia, thus freed from restraint, became more notorious than before. In the same year the poet suffered a grievous blow in the death of his elder brother in the Troad. He left Rome for Verona, and to the hints of a correspondent, Manlius (c. 68*a* 27), that rivals are taking advantage of his absence he replies in language of the deepest dejection. If in an elegy written later to his friend Allius he affects to speak of Clodia's frailties as occasional and such as he can bear with philosophical indifference, he was in truth drifting into the state of mind which he has so forcibly indicated in the couplet (c. 85)

*I hate and love the cause I cannot tell  
Only I feel it, and to feel is hell*

Tortured by her infidelities, he is powerless to shake off her fascination. Of the rivals who robbed him of happiness, the only one known to us otherwise than through Catullus' poems was Cicero's correspondent M. Caelius Rufus, whom we know to have been a favoured admirer of Clodia in the year 58 B.C. But there were

others — Quintus, Gellius, Egnatius. Cælius (c. 77), who had been his friend, as also Quintus, is addressed at first in tones of pathetic remonstrance, but in later epigrams he, like the rest, is assailed with reckless abuse or offensive insinuation.

Anger and disillusionment combined at length roused Catullus to make a desperate effort for freedom. In lines poignant in their sincerity (c. 76) he protests that his own conscience is clear; he has done and said all that man can; but his devotion has been wasted. "Why not resist, withdraw, and make an end of wilful misery?" Though hard, this is the only way. He ends with a heartfelt prayer, not that Lesbia's love for him should revive, not that she should become chaste—that is impossible—but that he may regain his health and be released from the noisome disease which he sees his passion to be.

The prayer was not in vain. Change of scene helped to work Catullus' emancipation, and this poem marks the end of his servitude. In some lines addressed to Cælius, with whom the fact that the latter's experience had been something similar to his own may have helped to reconcile him, he refers to Lesbia yet again (c. 58); but it is only to sigh that the Lesbia whom Catullus had loved should have sunk to the lowest depths of degradation. And when, perhaps in consequence of his changed attitude to Cæsar, she made some renewal of advances he made it clear by his reply that he would have none of her. This poem (c. 11), like the first which he had addressed to her, is in the Sapphic metre, and the recurrence in it of a single unusual word in a startlingly different connection shows an intended reference to the earlier verses. The message which Catullus bids his dubious friends

Furius and Aurelius convey is, as he says, "no pretty one"; yet the poem ends on a note of pathos:

*Let her not look for love of mine hereafter  
Love that once was is perished—hers the doom—  
Drooping like hedgerow blossom by the ploughshare  
touched in its passing*

To distract his mind and perhaps to mend his fortunes Catullus in the year after his final break with Clodia \* went to Bithynia on the staff of its governor, C Memmius, already known to us as the man to whom Lucretius addressed his poem. On the way out he visited the grave of his brother at Rhœteum, and inscribed on the tomb a few lines of farewell (c. 101), lines instinct with the most profound and unrelieved sadness. To his life in Bithynia he hardly refers. If he acquired local colour there for the most striking of his poems he did not get money, and if he found congenial companions among the staff we may infer (and it is perhaps all that we are justified in inferring), from the scandalous imputations which he makes upon his character, that he did not hit it off with his chief. But change of scene had restored his mental tone, and the poems in which he anticipates leaving the sultry plains of Nicæa and visiting the famous cities of Asia (c. 46), expresses his delight at finding himself once more in his country house by Lake Garda (c. 31), and sings with the pride of ownership the praises of the little vessel which had brought him safely home (c. 4) are among the happiest that he ever wrote.

An episode (c. 10) described with Terentian grace and lucidity, and clearly belonging to the time when he was fresh from Bithynia, shows him back at Rome and among his old associates. Love-affairs he had, but these were of

*I c.*, in 57 B.C. His connection with Clodia lasted 61-58 B.C.

no significance in his life like his passion for Clodia, and the writing of two at least of his longer pieces, *Attis* and *The Wedding of Peleus*, must have engaged his attention.

But the Rome to which he had returned was distracted by political strife. Like most of the men of letters, Catullus was opposed to the triumvirs, and his fastidious tastes were particularly offended by some of Cæsar's associates. In half a dozen ribald epigrams he attacked Cæsar's quartermaster Mamurra, in whose case he had the additional motive for enmity that he was his rival in an amour with a girl of Verona. From the lieutenant he diverted his attacks to the chief. At a time when speculation was rife as to Cæsar's intentions and to be his friend meant influence and advancement Catullus with characteristic independence penned the distych (c. 93) :

*To stand well with you, Cæsar, is nothing to me,  
Nor to know if a saint or a sinner you be*

But with Catullus politics was a matter of personal feeling. The wrath which he pours on Cæsar and Pompey in an iambic invective (c. 29) written soon after the first invasion of this island by the former (55 B.C.) is clearly due not so much to the conviction that father-in-law and son-in-law have "ruined everything" as that the man to profit by the spoils of Pontus and Spain, Gaul and Britain, should have been the detested Mamurra. So it is not surprising that in deference to pressure from his father, who was a friend of Cæsar's and occasionally his host, Catullus should have consented to lay aside his animosity against the champion of the Transpadanes, and sealed the reconciliation by being his guest at dinner. In the Sapphics addressed to Clodia there is a hint of

*Nil nimium studeo, Cæsar, tibi velle placere  
Nec scire utrum sis albus an ater homo.*



this change of attitude. Rhine and furthest Britain are characterised as monuments of Cæsar's greatness (cc. 11, 10). For more than this there was not time. The pathetic lines in which he upbraids his friend Cornificius for want of sympathy (c. 38), and perhaps a similar protest addressed to Alfenus (c. 30), show that he was in failing health, and some time in 54 B.C., short-lived, like so many of the erotic poets of Rome, Catullus passed away.

The lyrics of Catullus represent an achievement new in Latin literature, and one which was never again realised in equal perfection. Perhaps the most succinct characterisation of their qualities is contained in the phrase "passionate simplicity" applied to them by Fénelon. The emotions of a sensitive temperament seized at their supreme moment have been fixed for ever in language of undying charm. For simple as the diction is—it is that of ordinary conversation, and here and there is only saved from being prosaic by the perfect collocation of the words—it is pure and dainty, and in the poems of love and friendship rendered more endearing by the use of those caressing diminutives, native to the soil of Italy and still persistent upon it, which the Augustans did so ill a service to erotic poetry by seeking to discard.

The metre which Catullus especially made his own, and used with a freedom more effective than the severe uniformity cultivated in later days by Martial and Statius, was the hendecasyllabic,\* or Phalæcian, so called from

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's "*irresponsible indolent reviewers*" is a fluent example of a hendecasyllabic line, but it does not exhibit the frequent break after the sixth syllable which appears in the first of the two lines which follow

*Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus*

the fact that though it is traceable in early Greek popular poetry and was used by Sappho and Alcæus, it was revived and perhaps to some extent modified by Callimachus' contemporary Phalæcus. He is hardly less successful in his use of the glyconic metre, and in his iambics, whether pure or spondaic (scazontes). His Sapphics, with their irregular cæsuras and frequent hypermeter, give the impression of being rather rude. Yet he has the merit of adhering more closely to the original metre than Horace, and Munro has rightly acclaimed the "noble swell" of the close of one of his Sapphic stanzas.\*

Most famous among the lyrics are some of the earlier poems addressed to Lesbia, poems instinct with passion and bright with the gaiety of happy love, though touched with melancholy at the thought that joys are fleeting. Such a feeling finds voice in the poet's outburst, at once petulant and pathetic, against the "shades accursed which swallow up all pretty things," and in his plea to Lesbia that they should enjoy the moment :

*Suns may set and rise as bright,  
But, once quenched our little light,  
We must sleep one endless night*

5, 4-6.

Not less perfect are the poems connected with Catullus' travels and return from Bithynia. The first of these (c. 46), written in hendecasyllables, expresses to perfection the feeling of spring in the blood and the joy of travel ; the second (c. 31), while incidentally supplying proof that the "limping" iambic can give expression to beauty as well as to petulance and malice, voices to the full the

*Latus ut longe resonante Eoa  
Tunditur unda.*

11, 3-4

delight in the restfulness of home which, had it not been written, we might have imagined to be a monopoly of the Teutonic nations; while the third (c. 4), with the limpid flow of its pure iambs, has all the brightness and movement of the sunlit waters which the writer is recalling, though it ends with just a suggestion of regret that the jolly days are done.

Affectionate and sincere if fastidious and exacting, Catullus is the poet of friendship as well as of love. One need but refer to his whole-hearted delight at the thought of seeing Veranius home again safe and sound (c. 9), of the impatience of his longing to renew the delightful intercourse of the previous night with Licinius Calvus (c. 50), of his pathetic entreaty to Cornificius for a word of sympathy "sadder than duges of Simonides" (c. 38). That he was a good hater is shown by only too many a vile pasquinade. But neither unhappy love, reckless living, nor the bitterness of personal and political differences could destroy in Catullus the power to write with simplicity and charm. One of the most delightful of his shorter lyrics (c. 45) is also among the latest of his productions. The picture of Acme and Septimius, their interchange of vows and the genial *envoi*, make this poem perhaps the brightest portrayal of happy love in any language. A famous critic\* has pointed out how much more actuality there is in the reference to the great prizes of contemporary ambition to which Septimius prefers his love than in the frigid comparisons with Roman Ilia and Persian king made by Lydia and Telephus in the ode of Horace which provides a parallel to this poem† But, indeed, apart from this the Horatian duologue, with its lightly made

\* Munro, *Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus*

† Hor. C. 111, 9

proposals to discard penultimate attachments and revert to the older love, is not so much an idyll as a comedy of courtship. Here is an attempt to render the close of Catullus' lyric :

*Thus with omens bright the pair,  
Loved and loving, forward fare  
Fond Septimius, so he own  
Darling Acme—her alone—  
Syrias Britains all despises.  
Acme, true as he is kind,  
In Septimius still doth find  
All the love, the joy she prizes  
Mortals happier ne'er have been,  
No, nor fairer promise, seen*

Placed as a short lyrical poem in the first division of Catullus' productions, but resembling, as composed for an occasion rather than the outcome of the emotion of the moment, the longer poems of the second division, the hymn to Diana (c. 34) invites comparison with Horace's ode to Diana and Apollo (Hor. c. 1, 21). In simplicity, unity, and religious feeling the comparison is favourable to the earlier poet. A stanza may be given as a specimen :

*That thou mightest be the queen  
Of the mountains, and the green  
Woodlands, and the glades unseen,  
And the sounding streams*

But of the easy flow of Catullus' glyconics the translation gives a very inadequate idea.

The longer poems of Catullus have, as has been pointed out by R. Ellis, a common feature. Directly or indirectly they all bear on the subject of marriage. The series opens with two marriage songs (cc. 61, 62). The *Attis* (c. 63) presents the negation, the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (c. 64) the realisation of the idea of conjugal

union. The dedication of Berenice's lock (c. 66) testifies to her devotion to her consort Ptolemy, and the poem ends with an exhortation to fidelity in married love uttered by the lock in person. Finally\* in the elegy addressed to Allius (c. 68*b*) the love of Lesbia for Catullus is elaborately, though rather inaptly, compared with that of Laodamia for Protesilaus.

The first of the marriage songs (c. 61) is not, strictly speaking, an epithalamium, for the poet, in the character, as it were, of master of the ceremonies, prompts the actors, and gives utterance to appropriate lyrics at selected moments in the wedding festival. After invoking the attendance of Hymen on the happy occasion, the marriage of M Manius Torquatus and Vivia Aurunculeia, he calls on the maidens who are to escort the bride to her new home to sing the merits of the marriage god, which he rehearses for their instruction (1-75). The procession is about to start. At his bidding the doors are opened, and the torches, already "waving their splendid tresses," reveal a glimpse of the waiting bride within. To overcome her hesitation, he breaks into praises of her beauty and anticipations of the devotion which awaits her from her husband, thrice uttering the refrain "Bride of an hour come forth" (*Prodeas nova nupta*) (76-121). Fourth she comes, and the boys—for the procession included these as well as girls—are bidden to lift the torches, the groomsman to scatter nuts, and as the procession moves broad jests, a survival of the old Fescennine verses, are bandied at the expense of the latter, and, with more restraint, at that of bridegroom and bride (122-161). The husband's house is reached, and word is

\* The dialogue between the poet and a door (67), probably an early poem, deals with matrimonial scandals at Verona

given to lift the bride across the threshold. Then the boy who leads her is bidden surrender his charge to the matrons in attendance, and in due course the bridegroom is summoned to join the bride, who waits him, "her flower-like visage radiant, like white convolvulus or flaming poppy."\* In language full of tender charm the poet speaks his wish that the union may be blessed with offspring :

*Forth from mother's arms enfolding  
May a young Torquatus holding  
Baby hands, with lips apart  
Smile to joy his father's heart.*

And so with an exhortation to the pair to enjoy their youth he bids the maidens close the doors.

The other marriage song (c. 62) does not seem to have been written for a particular occasion ; the colouring is Greek rather than Roman—thus Hesperus, whose appearing gives the signal for the strain, is described as rising over Olympus—and it is likely, though it cannot be proved, that the poem was a free imitation of some Sapphic hymenæal. In this piece, which, graceful as it is, lacks the genial *naïveté* of the preceding poem, rival choruses of girls and boys voice in hexameter strophes their contrasted feelings about the married state by reproach or eulogy of the evening star, and justify them by comparing the maiden with a flower growing in a closed garden, lovely untouched, but marred in the plucking, the matron with a vine, useless when unsupported by the elm, but honoured and fruitful when duly trained.

The vividness with which Catullus has realised a strange situation and the skill he has shown in handling

\* *Ore floridulo nitens  
Alba parthenice velut  
Luteumve papaver.*

a difficult metre make the *Attis* (c. 63) the most arresting of the longer poems. It describes how Attis, known to religious mythology as a Phrygian beloved of Cybele and subsequently deified, but conceived by Catullus as an Athenian youth, passed oversea to Phrygia with a band of companions, and there, smitten with Corybantic frenzy, committed the act of self-mutilation whereby worshippers of the goddess dedicated themselves to her service, how on the morrow he is seized with remorse and meditates escape, but is thwarted by Cybele, who sends a lion to intimidate him, and ends his days as her sexless acolyte. The Galliambic metre, especially associated with the worship of Cybele, had been adopted from the Alexandrines before Catullus by Lævius and Varro. Originally a lesser Ionic tetrameter catalectic,\* it had been so far modified on the principle of representing a long syllable by two short ones (resolution), and on that of transferring the second of these to the succeeding foot, and there treating it, in conjunction with another short syllable, as convertible with a single long one (anaclassis), that its Ionic character had been obscured, and its movement becoming predominatingly trochaic it corresponded with two Anacreontic lines, the second of them one syllable short †. Further, owing to the normal, though not universal, resolution of the last complete foot, the swiftly moving trochaic rhythm seems to fail and break at the close in a shower of hurried syllables, thus supplying a medium deftly employed by Catullus to give the impression of febrile and nerveless agitation.

\* E.g., such a line as

*Simul unctos Tiberinus humeros lavit in undis*

(Hor. C. III 12, 6), minus the last syllable

† E.g., μακαρίζομεν σε τέττιξ.

The background of "pillared rocks" and the "chill, snow-swathed tracts of verdant Ida" is reminiscent of the poet's Eastern travel. The pathos of the situations is emphasised by a prodigality of rhetorical repetition \* and pressed home by artful alliteration, while the strangeness of the atmosphere finds its counterpart in the use of compounds unfamiliar and in some cases unique. Perhaps the most telling of several striking moments is that in which Attis wakes (ll. 39-41), and the rapidly touched landscape standing out clear and hard in the morning light is made to typify the sweeping of the shadows from his mind and the feeling of desolation which the clearer mental vision brought.

*But when sun the golden-visaged with his eyes radiating light  
Illumed ether's whiteness, solid earth, agitated sea,  
Of the night the shades dispelling with the rush of his chariot-steeds.*

The miniature epic on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, probably the latest of Catullus' poems, is also the most elaborate. After recalling how the sea-goddess became enamoured of the hero as he was sailing in the *Argo* on her first voyage it describes how all Thessaly flocked to see the preparations for the wedding. Thereafter come the gods to the banquet, and to them the Fates sing the future glories of Achilles, the destined offspring of the union. The poet concludes by regretting that because of the wickedness of later days the gods no longer deign to mingle with mankind. The narrative is interrupted by a digression on the desertion of Ariadne by Theseus, a representation of which is woven in the coverlet of the bridal couch. Although it has its purpose, that of enhancing by contrast the happiness of the present union,

\* E.g., ll. 21-25, *ego* five times; ll. 63-72, *ego, ego mihi, mihi, ego, ego, ego, ego, ubi, ubi, iam, iamque*



this digression overweights the poem. It actually exceeds in length the portion dealing with the main subject. The narrative produces a certain impression of monotony, largely owing to the fact that the clauses are coextensive with the lines. The same criticism might be made on the hexameter of Lucretius, but this has always an eager onward movement, while the Catullan line, tricked out with the Alexandrine graces of spondaic ending or pathetic iteration, seems to linger over its own undeniable charm. The poem, however, contains passages of astonishing beauty, notably that in which the effect produced by the guests, as in their gay attire they leave the palace and slowly disperse homewards, is compared with waves which, set in motion by a breeze at dawn, throng more and more thickly as it freshens, and gleam in the sunlight far out at sea rose-flushed. Or one may quote the description of Ariadne desolate, standing amid the seaweed like a Bacchante carved in stone (ll. 60-67) :

*Down dropped the fillet from her golden hair,  
Dropped the light vest that veiled her bosom fair,  
The filmy cincture dropped, that strove to bind  
Her orb'd breasts, which would not be confined.  
And as they fell around her feet of snow,  
The salt waves caught and flung them to and fro*

Of the longer elegiac poems *Berenice's Lock* (c. 66) is a translation of the *πλόκαμος Βερενίκης* by Callimachus, the elegy to Hortensius (c. 65), which announces translations of that poet, being perhaps the covering letter. It exhibits a learning and an awkward ingenuity in the transitions for which the original is probably responsible. Vergil,

\* Sir Theodore Martin's translation, quoted by H. Paul in the *Nineteenth Century*, January 1907.

however, has paid it the compliment of putting a line spoken by the lock in the mouth of his hero.\*

More interesting, from its autobiographical character, but even more artificial in construction, is the poem to Allius (c. 68*b*).† It reminds one (the comparison is Professor Tyrrell's) of those ingeniously contrived Chinese boxes which are made to go one inside the other, for, starting with the services rendered him by Allius in his intrigue with Lesbia, he proceeds to compare her love with that of Laodamia for Protesilaus, and is thus led to Troy and his brother's death (to which he refers in lines some of which occur also in other elegies contemporary or nearly so with this—c. 68*a*, 20, 23, 24 ; c. 101, 6). This forms the central part of the poem, and from it he returns by a somewhat forced transition to Laodamia, whose love, illustrated by two elaborate similes, is this time pronounced weaker than that of Lesbia, who though at times unfaithful has shown herself conspicuously kind, wherefore the more thanks to Allius as above.

The elegiac poems do not as a rule show Catullus at his best, although there are two or three, such as his prayer for release from his passion (c. 76) and the lines in which he bids his brother farewell (c. 161), which in their profound pathos are unsurpassed. The fact is that Catullus has no such mastery over the elegiac metre as he exhibits in his lyrics ; in the management of the pentameter in particular he has much to learn. What he

\* Cf 66, 39, *Invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*, with *A.* vi 460, *Invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi*.

† It is probably a distinct poem from 68*a*, with which it is joined in the MSS. The latter, a letter of apology, and thus presenting a parallel to 65, is addressed to Manlius, seemingly the Manlius Torquatus whose wedding is celebrated in the first of the hymenæals (61)

feels he says, placing his words in their natural and most effective order, but with a neglect of metrical smoothness and a lavishness in the use of elision from which the more polished elegists of Augustan days would have shrunk. If it is the pieces of Alexandrine accomplishment which have earned for Catullus the epithet of "learned," it is his lyrics which have made him immortal.

## VII

### CICERO

FROM the point of view of literature the final period of the Roman Republic is dominated by that supreme orator and man of letters who, playing no inconsiderable part in its politics, has made it through his speeches and correspondence more familiar than any other epoch of ancient history, who naturalised great tracts of Greek learning in his native tongue, fitted the Latin language to be a vehicle for philosophic thought, and achieved a style which is the basis of modern European prose.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO (106-43 B.C.), born in the Volscian town of Arpinum, belonged to a family of only local distinction. His father, a man of literary tastes and weak health, lived constantly at his native place, but he sent his sons Marcus and Quintus to Rome for their education, in particular in order to profit by the eloquence of Crassus and Antonius, with whom he had some acquaintance.

The elder of the brothers had an enquiring and a receptive mind. It was with conviction that in later life he quoted the line

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*Knowledge of all that is—delight supreme \**

<sup>1</sup> γλυκύτερον οὐδὲν (ἔστιν) ἢ πάντ' εἰδέναι.

*Att.* IV xi 2.

The manifold character of his later production was the outcome of a wide scheme of education. He learned eloquence from Crassus, law from the Scævolas, literature from the poet Archias. With the history of his own country he acquired a more than ordinary acquaintance. Before he was twenty he had formed intimate personal relations with three of the most eminent representatives of the three leading schools of philosophy, while the titles of some early attempts show that poetical composition was not neglected. "I spent," he says, "days and nights in the study of every branch of learning."\*

But it was upon the attainment of oratorical excellence that his mind was chiefly set. Note-book in hand he attended Forum and tribune, now depleted by the action of the Varian Commission and the exigencies of the Social war; and not a day passed on which he did not compose and deliver declamations in Latin or preferably in Greek. Referring to a time when his health was endangered by his exertions, he observed quite simply that he considered that he ought to run any risk rather than abandon the hope of oratorical distinction which he aspired to attain †

The result of this preparation was that when Cicero began his career at the bar he was already an accomplished orator, and his finished and uncommon style of speaking attracted immediate attention. It was primarily as an orator that Cicero stood out before his contemporaries. His production other than oratorical belongs to the times when he was debarred by circumstances from playing a prominent part in public life, and the main thread in a summary of his literary career must necessarily consist of a record of his speeches.

His oration for Quinctius (81 B.C.), his earliest extant

\* *Brutus*, § 308

† *Ibid* § 314.

speech, is of a technical character and of no special interest. But in his defence of Sextus Roscius of Ameria (80 B.C.) on a charge of parricide he made his mark by the courage with which he defied the influence of Sulla's freedman Chrysogonus, who held the property of the elder Roscius in collusion with the real culprits, distant relatives of the murdered man. After this, he says, no case was deemed too important to be committed to his charge. But considerations of health induced him to leave Rome for two years, which he spent in a six months course of philosophy at Athens, followed by a tour in Asia, on which he was attended by the most eminent rhetoricians of the day; and a visit to Rhodes, where Molo, with whom he had already studied at Rome, further pruned his redundant periods

He returned to Rome so much improved both in health and in oratory that he describes himself as a changed man. The extent of this improvement may be gauged by his great indictment of Verres. He began his official career as quæstor in Sicily (75 B.C.), and in consequence of the connection then formed was retained (70 B.C.) to prosecute the notorious governor who had oppressed the province for three years. If the defence of Roscius brought Cicero into public notice, his prosecution of Verres won him the leadership of the Roman bar. Never was a more tremendous exposure of cruelty and rapacity than is contained in the summary of evidence embodied in the five divisions of the second speech (*Actio secunda*), published after the abandonment of the case by the accused man

The year of Cicero's prætorship (66 B.C.) was marked by two noteworthy speeches. His defence of Cluentius of Larinum against a charge of poisoning, perhaps the

most famous of his pleadings in a criminal case, unfolds a fearful picture of demoralisation in middle-class provincial life. His earliest political harangue, the speech *De imperio Cnæi Pompeii*, is a fine eulogy of the general and the man, but does not go deeply into considerations which might justify the commission of unprecedented powers to an individual.

The speeches of Cicero's consulship (*Orationes consulares*, 63 B.C.) represent stages in the struggle between the upholders of senatorial authority and maintainers of law and order (for such Cicero had now become) on the one side and the democratic party and its extreme anarchic wing on the other. In the three \* speeches *De lege agraria* he foiled an attempt of the democrats to find a counterpoise to the power of Pompey, now supreme general in the East, in a commission appointed ostensibly to carry out a vote-catching agrarian law. In his defence of Rabirius against a charge of treason he parried an attack on the *Senatus consultum ultimum*, or Senate's declaration of martial law, under cover of which the accused man had killed Saturninus thirty-six years earlier. In the four orations against Catiline, Cicero successively unmasks the designs of Catiline in the Senate, announces his flight to the people, describes in the assembly the confrontation of the conspirators with the proofs of their guilt, and discusses in the Senate the alternative proposals of execution or imprisonment, while asking that body not to consider the risk which the former course may entail upon himself. Two more speeches of this year are connected with the Catilinarian affair. In the *Pro Muræna* Cicero defends one of the newly elected consuls against a charge of bribery. This speech, which shows the light-heartedness

Of the first speech only the close survives

o a man who has just passed successfully through a serious crisis, is distinguished by adroit banter of the prosecutors, Sulpicius the jurist and Cato the Stoic philosopher; but an argument on which he lays stress is the inexpediency of exposing the state without consuls to the dangers which threatened it while Catiline was still in the field. The speech *Pro Sulla* is a defence of a man falsely accused of complicity in the Catilinarian plot. In defending the citizenship of Archias (*Pro Archia*, 63 B.C.), the poet who had taught Cicero in early years, the orator felt sufficiently sure of his case to dispense for the most part with argument and entertain the jury with an eloquent eulogium of literature. Now in the dignified position of an ex-consul, Cicero seems to have somewhat relaxed his activity in the courts. But in 59 B.C., the year of Cæsar's consulship, he defended L. Valerius Flaccus, prætor of Asia, against a charge of extortion. His defence took the form of an attempt to cast doubts on the credibility of the witnesses. The sum of much of the argument is "Don't believe a Greek on his oath." \*

In the following year the cabal of the pretenders, through the agency of the tribune Clodius, drove Cicero, who stood in their way, into exile, on the ground that as consul he had executed citizens uncondemned. On his return the orator made a great effort to regard first his material, then his political position. To the first head are to be referred the speeches in which he thanked the Senate and the people respectively,† and more definitely his oration to recover the site of his house (*De domo sua*),

\* Cf. *Pro Flacco*, 4, 9

† Severally entitled *Cum Senatu* and *Cum populo gratias agit* The latter is of doubtful authenticity



which Clodius had dedicated as a site for a Temple of Liberty, and one (*De haruspicum responsis*) dealing with a pronouncement of the soothsayers that dedicated places were being desecrated, which Cicero explained as referring to Clodius' own enormities. Under the latter head comes his speech for Sestius (*Pro Sestio*, 56 B.C.), a friend and partisan prosecuted for using violence at the passing of the bill for his recall, and, closely connected with this, his examination of Vatinius (*In Vatinnium testem interrogatio*), who was indicted for giving false evidence at the trial of Sestius. In the speech for Sestius, Cicero tried to foster the consolidation of the orderly elements in the state, and politically the most important passage in it is that in which he describes the *populares* or true "people's party," a term which he interpreted as including all men of good will.

These attempts at rallying the moderates were abruptly checked. Cæsar told Quintus Cicero that he must make good the undertaking for his brother's discreet behaviour which he had given as a condition of his recall. Cicero gave way, and the first fruits of his submission was his speech about the consular provinces (*De provinciis consularibus*, 56 B.C.), characterised in his correspondence as his "palinode." It was a plea that Cæsar's command in Gaul should be prolonged, and it contained an eloquent and doubtless sincere tribute to the greatness of Cæsar's achievements. The speech *Pro Balbo* delivered in the same year is also connected with Cicero's change of attitude. For Cn. Cornelius Balbus of Gades, whose citizenship was called in question, was the friend and financial agent of Cæsar, and it was to oblige the latter that Cicero undertook his defence. In Rabirius Postumus (B.C. 53), accused of extortion, he defended yet another associate of the

triumvirs. In point of fact he was no longer an independent politician, and the production of the *De Oratore* (B.C. 55) and the *De Republica* (begun in the following year) shows that he was turning his attention to literature, though literature of a political complexion. But in his orations in favour of Cælius (*Pro Cælio*, 56 B.C.) and against Piso (*In Pisonem*, B.C. 55) his functions as an advocate coincided with his individual predilections. The first was a defence of a friend and correspondent, the second an attack on a personal enemy. Cælius, the successful rival of Catullus in the affections of Clodia (p. 144) had subsequently quarrelled with his mistress, and it was she who had promoted this prosecution. Cælius was accused of attempting to poison, firstly, the envoy of Ptolemy, ex-King of Egypt, and secondly, Clodia herself. In the course of this speech Cicero found it convenient to whitewash Clodius, since Cælius' friendship with the latter had been used to his prejudice. He paints the life of Clodia as one of unexampled profligacy, and represents Cælius as an industrious student who had momentarily come under her influence. The speech against Piso was a fierce invective against one of the consuls of the year in which Cicero had been exiled. In his defence of Plancius (*Pro Plancio*, 54 B.C.), again (and in this respect it ranks with the *Pro Sestio*), he was discharging a debt of gratitude. For Plancius, now accused of having violated the Licinian law about political associations in his candidature for the ædileship, had as quæstor befriended Cicero in Macedonia during his exile. The speech is distinguished by the pathos of its close, in which Cicero pleads for the acquittal of Plancius as the man to whom he owed his own preservation. But the interests of Cæsar and Pompey were diverging, and when in that

year of anarchy 52 B.C. Clodius had met his death in the "battle of Bovillæ," Cicero published an oration on behalf of Milo, the senatorial swashbuckler who was charged with his murder; and in the second of its two alternative lines of defence,\* namely that if Milo did kill Clodius he had done his country a signal service, he was once again taking a senatorial line in a public utterance. The expression used above is "published" not "delivered," for Cicero had been intimidated by the display of force made by Pompey, now as sole consul responsible for the maintenance of order, and by the clamour of the partisans of a popular demagogue; and the speech he actually made—copies of which still existed in Quintilian's day—was if not a fiasco at any rate a much less effective performance than the published work, perhaps the most perfectly constructed of all his orations.

Then came a silence of six years. From his governorship of Cilicia Cicero returned to find Rome on the verge of civil war, and when, after the Battle of Pharsalia, he trod the soil of Italy again it was as the amnestied member of a defeated party. From oratory he turned to literature, and in his work on "The Laws" (*De legibus*, 46 B.C.), supplemented the six books on the Republic, as in the *Brutus* and the *Orator* he completed the series of works on oratory which he had commenced in his treatise on oratorical education (*De Oratore*). Moved, however, by the clemency of Cæsar to M. Marcellus, a prominent member of the Republican party, Cicero broke his long silence and delivered in the Senate the oration entitled *Pro Marcello*, a speech of

\* The first was that circumstances pointed to Clodius rather than Milo as the aggressor

thanks and eulogy containing a cautious exhortation to constitutional action. This was the first of the Cæsarian speeches, and it was followed by the *Pro Ligario*, an appeal for clemency on behalf of a Pompeian now living in exile but prosecuted by an enemy for his conduct during the war in Africa, and a defence of Deiotarus, King of Galatia (*Pro rege Deiotaro*), against a charge of attempting to murder Cæsar. These two speeches were delivered, not in open court, but in the Dictator's house.

At all times of his life Cicero had taken a keen intellectual interest in philosophy, and the death of his daughter Tullia (46 B.C.) impelled him to turn to it for consolation. The next eighteen months saw the compilation of an encyclopædia of philosophy. It seemed as though Cicero's production was to end in this calm and reflective vein. In point of fact it culminated in a blaze of oratory. As the death of Tullia sent Cicero to philosophy, so that of Cæsar recalled him to public life. He was not long in realising that the murder of the Dictator had ended the despot but not the despotism, and the fourteen Antonian or, as he called them, Philippic orations represent one aspect of his duel with the first claimant to the reversion. His moderately worded criticism on Antony's conduct (*First Philippic*, September 2, 44 B.C.) elicited an angry reply from the person attacked. In the elaborate exposure of the latter's past, known as the *Second Philippic* (December 44 B.C.), Cicero threw down the gauntlet. During the struggle which followed he was in effect, as in the Catilinarian crisis twenty years before, the prime minister of Rome, and the twelve Philippics which followed represent that part of his functions which he discharged by oratory. We see

him animating a government (*Phil.* 3) and a populace (*Phil.* 4) against the pretender, deprecating negotiations with a rebel in arms and confirming Octavian in his position as champion of the Republic (*Phil.* 5), urging the people to await with patience the issue of the negotiations which he had done his best to prevent (*Phil.* 6), encouraging the Senate to act with resolution in the event of the anticipated failure of these negotiations (*Phil.* 7), urging the declaration of formal war against Antony (*Phil.* 8), honouring the envoy who had sacrificed his life to the exigencies of his mission (*Phil.* 9), confirming the position and acknowledging the services of Brutus in Macedonia (*Phil.* 10), and repeating these sentiments in the Forum (*Phil.* 11), denouncing the proposal to send yet another embassy to Antony (*Phil.* 12), criticising in scathing terms a letter addressed by him to the Senate (*Phil.* 13), and finally pronouncing a splendid panegyric on the soldiers who had fallen in the first successful encounter near Mutina (*Phil.* 14). But he was fighting, as he himself said, "with words against swords." Not with Senate or Assembly, but with the veteran legions lay the decision. No one knew this better than Octavian, and when the death of both consuls left him in sole command of the Republican forces he came to an understanding with the two other masters of legions. Of the proscription which was a part of this arrangement the most prominent victim was Cicero. After an ineffectual attempt to escape by ship he was killed by soldiers upon the seashore near Gaeta, dying, as he said he wished to die, in the country he had so often saved.

"Only an advocate and not a good one;" such is Mommsen's characterisation of the man whose name is

a synonym for eloquence. In denying Cicero statesmanship the historian may be right or wrong; but he is not justified in withholding from him the recognition of supreme excellence in oratory, whether forensic or political. Long-winded, egoistical, irrelevant, these are the worst epithets which can be thrown at Cicero, and they do not entirely lack justification. But to some extent they are explicable by the circumstances in which he found himself. "Place Cicero in his environment," says a French critic,\* "and most of his faults disappear." Fashions change in oratory as in other things. Already in the time of Tacitus an admirer of the moderns is made to ask, "who nowadays would have the patience to peruse the five books against Verres? Who could tolerate the lengthy disquisitions on plea and formula which we read in the speeches for Julius and Cæcina?"† But Tacitus lived in an age impatient of redundancy, and there is no evidence that the speeches of Cicero were felt to be tedious by those to whom they were addressed.

Again, if he dilates on his own services there is truth in the contention that in "putting his own glory at his clients' disposal" he was serving the interests of the latter. Egoism was sometimes demanded by the argument. Cicero's appeal to the jury to save Plancius, as the man who had saved himself, is logically preceded by a demonstration that he himself was worth preserving.

Once more, the imputation of irrelevancy, if based on Cicero's appeals to considerations which lay outside the

\* Pichon (*Hist. de la Litt. Lat.*, p. 197), to whom I am indebted in this estimate of Cicero's oratory.

† Tacitus, *Dialogus de oratoribus*, 20

points at issue, overlooks the confusion between the legal and the political aspects of cases which was a feature of Roman criminal proceedings; while if it has reference to his frequent resort to commonplace, or his efforts to rouse pity or indignation, it fails to make due allowance for the emotional temperament of Roman juries. The orator himself, who knew his business, reckons among his special merits his power of passing from technicalities to general ideas. If in his speech for Cælius he develops his conception of honourable tolerance, if in that for Marcellus he eulogises clemency, or in his defence of Archias extols the civilising influence of letters, these are no otiose disquisitions, but are calculated to redound to the advantage of his clients.

In any case it is unlikely that the defects referred to seriously detracted from Cicero's effectiveness in his own day. Quintilian tells us that he was regarded as the king of the Roman bar.\* His positive merits are undeniable. In his openings, whether removing prejudice or conciliating favour, he is suave and adroit; in his narration of the circumstances of the case lucid, graphic, and more artful than at first sight appears. For instance, his account of the circumstances in which Clodius met his death, an account in which no point which can tell in favour of the accused is omitted, is a defence in itself. When he comes to the establishment of his client's innocence or the refutation of the charges against him he is plausible and full of resource. He is ready with a favourable explanation of doubtful proceedings, derides his opponent's representations, and overwhelms him with a torrent of interrogations, failure to answer any

\* Quint. x. 1. 112. *Ab hominibus suæ ætatis regnare in iudiciis dictus est*

one of which will lay him open to suspicion. Finally, in his perorations he excels in moving his audience's sensibilities. If it be thought that there is some monotony in the recurrence of appeals to emotion at the close of Cicero's speeches it must be remembered that on account of his reputation in this respect he was constantly deputed to speak last, and consequently at a stage in the proceedings when such appeals would be most in place. Certainly he is a master of pathos—handled with tact, as where he weeps for Milo who will not weep for himself, heightened by skilful touches, as by that reference to Sulla's son, "who, poor boy, knows the way to the Forum and the law courts better than to the field of exercise or the school," and developed in a crescendo of complaint and condolence till client and advocate, judge and jury are alike dissolved in tears. With all this Cicero's broad and liberal treatment of his cases, his genial assumption of the ordinary point of view, his anecdotes—and he did not mind telling one against himself—his wit, in the opinion of the grave Quintilian too frequently indulged, even his puns, more acceptable to the countrymen of Plautus than to us, must have made him an ideal speaker to a Roman jury.

Whether he was greater in his forensic or his public orations is doubtful. One may agree with Messalla in Tacitus' *Dialogue on Oratory*, that "it is not the defences of P. Quinctius and Licinius Archias which make Cicero a great orator. Catiline and Milo, Verres and Antony, have set this crown of glory on his head;" one may agree with this and yet not answer the question, for the speeches instanced come from either department, and Messalla says no more than that it is the speeches on great subjects



and on great criminals rather than those on civil cases to which Cicero owes his reputation. But though their subjects make the Catilinarian and Philippic orations the best known of his speeches, there are greater inequalities in Cicero's political than in his legal eloquence. Such passages as the roll of Pompey's exploits in the speech for the Manilian law, or the tribute to Sulpicius, "who bore with him on his embassy the death which had he remained at home he might have escaped," show him a splendid panegyrist; but his invective, as where he hurls at Piso such words as "beast, butcher, lump of mud, gallows-bird, and carcase," sometimes degenerates into abuse. Moreover, his deliberative eloquence—though this is truer of the fourth Catilinarian than of such of the Philippics as were delivered in the Senate—is lacking in the grave simplicity which is most effective in debate. And if one recurs to his plausibility and pathos as an advocate, and considers his obvious happiness in the lighter passages of his judicial eloquence, as his banter of pedantry whether juristic or Stoic in the speech for Muræna, or his apology for youthful wildness in that for Cælius, it would seem that it was in the law courts rather than in the Senate or the tribune that Cicero found the most congenial field for the exercise of his talents.

Yet the oratorical qualities displayed in either field are to a great extent identical. There is the same faculty of dramatic presentation, whether he is describing the steps taken by a practised trickster to retain sole possession of a sum which he had been commissioned to distribute to a jury,\* or the confusion which fell upon the Catilinarians when confronted with the

\* *Pro Cluentio*, 25 71.

proofs of their guilt,\* the same skill in characterisation, whether displayed in the contrasted pictures of the egregious pair of consuls in the speech for Sestius,† or in the series of satirical portraits of Antony in the Second Philippic, the same power of irony, whether he is dissociating Sulla from responsibility for the rascalities of his freedman by comparing him with Jupiter, whose exalted position does not leave him leisure to prevent the occurrence of natural catastrophes,‡ or when with reference to Piso's assertion that he "did not care for" a triumph he recommends "this *mannikin*, this Epicurus compact of clay and mud" to send a pamphlet to his son-in-law Cæsar in Gaul, and try and convert *him* to this philosophical quietism § Above all there is everywhere present what is *par excellence* the skill of the rhetorician—amplification, the heightening by comment and reflection of the pathos of a situation or the heinousness of an offence. Nowhere is this better exemplified than by his handling of the case of Gavius,|| a Roman citizen flogged and crucified by Verres at Messana. The subject is approached in a subdued and almost diffident tone. After a brief reference to the evidence given at an earlier stage in the proceedings, he continues :

"What am I to do now ? When I have already been speaking for so many hours on one topic, the accused man's villainous cruelty, and have exhausted almost the whole force of the language which his crime deserves on other cases, without taking thought to retain your attention by varying the charges, how am I to speak on such a subject as this ? There is, I think, one method and only

\* *Cat* 3 10-13.

† *Pro Sestio*, 8 18

‡ *Pro Rosc. Am* 45 131

§ *In Pisonem*, 25 59

|| *In Verrem*, ix, 5 159-169

one. I will put the facts before you. They are so grave in themselves that neither my eloquence, which is nothing, nor any man's will be found necessary to kindle your indignation."

Then follows a recital of the facts, graphic and simple, yet with no touch omitted which could rouse odium against the persecutor, or sympathy with the victim.

"A Roman citizen, gentlemen, was beaten with rods in the open market-place of Messana. And all the time no groan was heard nor any utterance from that unhappy man amidst his agony and the noise of blows but the words, 'I am a Roman citizen.'"

But Cicero is only beginning. Abruptly he breaks into an apostrophe of freedom, and the legislation which was the Roman's charter, invoked by the victim, disregarded by the oppressor, despite the pitying protests of the bystanders. Then come the torture and the crucifixion which consummated the flagellation, the admission by Verres himself that the appeal to citizenship had been made, an appeal since proved by evidence to have been based on fact—but let that pass,—the outrageousness of disregarding such an appeal, everywhere and at all times potent, yet here ignored and not even admitted as a ground for the obvious course of delay and enquiry. The charge gathers and grows, enhanced and emphasised by all the devices of climax, hypothesis, and interrogation until (like Warren Hastings, long after indicted by Burke "in the name of humanity") the wretched culprit finds himself arraigned in the cause of common citizenship and universal freedom.

Seventy years earlier a similar story had been told and similar principles invoked by an orator as vigorous

and not less incisive than Cicero. But the hastiest comparison of Cicero's treatment of the case of Gavius with Cato's protest against the proceedings of the prætor Thermus\* will suffice to show how much has been gained in the effect produced on the emotions by the artistic and calculated amplification used by the later orator.

It is natural that in a long series of speeches by an orator so painstaking as Cicero some development should be perceptible. Luxuriant, antithetical, and full of conceits, characterised on the whole by an "exaggerated unnaturalness," † and delivered volubly with a sing-song intonation—such was the Asiatic style of oratory, which, commended in Hortensius, then leader of the Roman bar, by a splendid voice and a marvellous memory, held the field in Cicero's youth. Of this at the outset it would seem Cicero's oratory exhibited a modification. It is true that Landor protests, "Asiatic never was Cicero, though he sometimes wore at the bottom of his rhetorician's robe a flounce too many;" and with far more authority an eminent Ciceronian scholar of to day has doubted "whether the early extant speeches of Cicero were in the style of Hortensius" ‡ Yet it is probable that in the laboured antitheses of the orations for Quinctius and Roscius of Ameria we see at any rate some features of the Asianism which was congenial to Cicero, and from which he never entirely shook himself free. But in any case the resumption of theoretical training which followed two years of practical experience at the bar resulted in the adoption by him of a quieter style of delivery and a less redundant

\* Referred to on p. 108.

† Prof Wilkins in his edition of Cicero's *De Oratore*.

‡ Dr. Reid.

expression.\* Under the influence of Molon of Rhodes, who had already taught him at Rome, Cicero adopted an intermediate style, a compromise which still leaned rather in the direction of the Asiatic. The most important outcome of this change, the Verrine orations, shows Cicero in some respects at the height of his achievement. For graphic and effective narration there are some passages in the Verrines which he never surpassed. Yet the peroration, with the appeal to all the gods and goddesses, is still a trifle stilted and archaistic. His powers grew with the demands upon them, and the necessity, imposed on him by his position, of addressing Senate and populace as well as the jury-courts taught his eloquence more varied tones. In particular, the strenuous conflict of the Catilinarian crisis stimulated, as, on the other hand, the curtailment of his political independence by the triumvirs depressed his genius. Moreover, his oratorical supremacy did not remain unchallenged. There was a school of eloquence which, recognising no distinction between the Rhodian and the Asiatic schools, assigned Cicero to the latter and voted him nerveless and diffuse. These were the Atticists, who, claiming a monopoly in the reproduction of Attic oratory, took as their models various Attic writers—Xenophon, for instance, or even Thucydides, but especially Lysias. They aimed at purity of diction and simplicity of composition, and eschewed a rhythmical and cadenced period. The leaders of this school were Calvus the excitable and vehement, who extorted from Vatinius, whom he was prosecuting, the ejaculation, "Must I be condemned because he is eloquent?" but who yet was robbed of his vigour, according to Cicero, by excessive self-criticism; and in a younger

\* *Brutus*, § 316

generation Marcus Brutus, a serious but dry and lifeless speaker. Most eminent of the Atticists was Julius Cæsar, a purist in diction, and in his speeches, as in his writings, a lover of simplicity unadorned. Against this school Cicero in the *Brutus* and *Orator* conducts a polemic, denying the title of Atticists to those who restricted their attention to the plain style to the neglect of others of which Attic oratory also supplied models, and arguing that rhythm in oratory satisfied a natural craving of the human ear.

Cicero's assertion that the Atticists found themselves deserted by their audiences may be over-coloured ; but there can be no doubt that his view embodied the truer conception of the genius of the Latin language. The simplicity of Greek was not to be precisely reproduced in Latin without loss of charm and effect.

Nevertheless Cicero learned something by this controversy. The final stage of his oratorical style shows a compromise between Asiatic and Attic, in which the latter predominates. The mellow and temperate eloquence of the "Cæsar" speeches, explicable in part by the circumstances in which they were delivered, shows that the criticism which had censured Ciceronian eloquence as florid had not been unfelt. The increased simplicity and directness discernible in the *Philippics*, if they are the outcome of the deadly earnestness of the struggle and the certainty in the speaker's mind that now at last the path of duty was clear, are also not unconnected with his final conviction that the true ideal of eloquence was the Attic as exhibited by Demosthenes, a conviction to which the very title he gave to the speeches delivered against Antony bore testimony.

Cicero's saying, "the poet is next door to the orator," suggests that we should pass from his speeches to his poems. To do so is to turn from a field in which he reigns supreme to one in which he is accounted a conspicuous failure. Yet in the development of the hexameter he has his place.\* Standing between Ennius and Lucretius, he has achieved a great advance in polish on the former; † while the latter, of whom some lines in Cicero's translation of Aratus' astronomical poem are not unworthy, ‡ has paid him the compliment of imitation. A couple of versions of Homeric passages § are not without merit, while of his vastly superior iambs, a rendering of part of Æschylus' *Prometheus vinculus*, || though tinged with the archaism which clung about the Latin tragedians, is instinct with oratorical power. .

Of his original poems the two epics, each in three books, on his triumph (*De consulatu suo*) and his tribulation (*De temporibus suis*) are represented, the first of them by eighty-four lines, of which seventy-eight are continuous, the latter by two; another on Cicero's fellow townsman, *Marius*, survives only in a vigorous description (thirteen lines) of a portent, the killing of a serpent by an eagle; and a fourth, which celebrated

\* See p 140

† Terminations such as *convertit curriculum sol* recall Ennius. In the *Phaenomena* and *Prognostica* the choice of subject and some touches, e.g. the repetition of *vocibus instat* in *Progn.*, *De Div.* 1. § 14, and the pathos in *Andromeda a fugiens aspectum maesta parentis*, *Phoen.* *De N.D.* 11 § 116, are Alexandrine. But on the whole Cicero is little affected by the Alexandrines, and at the close of his life was definitely antagonistic to them.

‡ E.g. *De N.D.* 11 § 159.

§ The portent and the speech of Calchas, *De Div.* 11 § 63, the song of the Sirens, *De Fin.* v. § 49

|| *Iusc.* 11 § 23.

Cæsar's expeditions to this island, though apparently completed, seems never to have been published, possibly owing to the loss of interest in the subject admitted by the writer.\* The poems of which he was himself the hero must be judged by the long fragment, a speech by the Muse Urania. Tedious in matter and monotonous in rhythm, it must have offended the critics less by its execution than by its tactless egoism. They took their revenge by concentrating attention on the two lines from the *Tribulation*. Quoted,† one of them with sarcastic comment by Juvenal, the other with fond championship by himself,‡ they have served to put Cicero out of court as a poet with those by whom they are regarded as typical specimens of his work. This they are not. Difficult as it is to accept Plutarch's statement that Cicero was the most considerable poet of his day, though restricted as it must be to the twilight which preceded the dawning of Lucretius and Catullus, enough of Cicero's poetry survives to prove that he attained at least a respectable mediocrity.

Cicero has told us that it is a mistake to look for his true opinions in his judicial speeches. Even in his public orations the affinity which subsists between the orator and the actor—and Cicero had the makings of a

\* Besides these there was *The Meadow*, apparently a collection of epigrams, to judge by one instance which survives from it

† "O Fortunatam natam me consule Romam!"  
*Antoni gladios potuit contemnere si sic*  
*omnia dixisset* Juv. Sat. x. 122

‡ *Cedant arma togæ concedat laurea laudi. De Off* 1 77; *In Pisonem* iii 73, *Phil* 11. 20,

The jingle which characterises each of these lines seems to have been affected by Cicero. Cf. the line endings in *De consulatu*, 50-54, *moncbant, furebant, iubebant, vereri, teneri*.



great actor—warns us to accept with caution the utterances of a politician not unsuspected of opportunism. But he has made ample amends in his correspondence, which has given of the workings of his mind a revelation so complete as to prejudice, perhaps unfairly, the reputation of the statesman, though it does not impair our affection for the man.

"Cicero's letters," wrote the rhetorician Fronto, "are perfection,"\* and this praise hardly seems excessive. A leading actor in one of the most momentous periods of the world's history, member of a society for which a high level of culture and the need for reciprocal information between provinces and metropolis, ill-satisfied by the meagre official gazette, made letter-writing at once a necessity and an art, Cicero possessed in himself an extraordinary combination of aptitudes for success as a correspondent. A unique literary gift, a whole-hearted absorption in the affairs of the moment, a sensitive temperament quick to demand and ready to render sympathy, with vivacity and a feminine desire to please, such were some of the qualities which made him a superlative writer of letters.

The value of the correspondence is enhanced by the fact that it was not written with a view to publication. Not till fifteen months before his death did Cicero entertain the idea of collecting and editing his letters. The outcome of this project (for the realisation of which at its inception only a small nucleus was at hand) is seen in 864 letters, of which ninety are addressed to Cicero by his friends. They are distributed into four collections, sixteen books of general correspondence (*Epistolæ ad*

\* *Epistolis Ciceronis nihil est perfectius* Fronto, *Ad M. Antoninum*.

*Familiares*), the same number of books of letters to Atticus, three to his brother Quintus, and two (out of an original nine) to Marcus Brutus. Of these four collections the first two are by far the most important. The letters to Quintus are surprisingly formal in tone, in view of the affection which, despite Quintus' irritable temper, undoubtedly existed between them. The letters to Brutus, long suspected but now generally admitted to be genuine,\* belong exclusively to the last six months of Cicero's life, and are mainly remarkable as developing a grave divergence of opinion between him and Cicero, both as to the latter's uncompromising severity towards supporters of Antony and his readiness to conciliate all allies, notably Octavius, against him. But the correspondence with Atticus, covering a momentous quarter of a century (68-43 B C), provides, as Cornelius Nepos has observed, the equivalent of a continuous history of the period. And it is not merely a record, but a running commentary on contemporary events made not by an onlooker but by an actor, a man too with supreme literary gifts, who could be witty even when distracted by anxiety. In these letters we see the incidents of party warfare described with the excitement and the relish which one who was in the thick of them experienced at the moment. Take the following, written on the morning of the election of Clodius to the ædileship, an election which every disposition had been taken to prevent: "I am writing this at 3 A.M. . . . Milo is already in occupation of the Campus; the candidate Marcellinus is snoring so loudly that I can hear him in the next house;"† or this, penned in a year of con-

\* With the possible exception of 1 16 and 17—both, like 1 4 and 1. 13, from Brutus to Cicero

† *Att* IV xv 7

spicuous electoral corruption (54 B.C.): "Now come with me to the Campus. Bribery is rampant. *En voici la preuve*; on July 15th the rate of interest rose from four to eight per cent." There are aspirations proved futile by subsequent events, like that which Cicero played with in the year which saw the formation of the First Triumvirate. \* "How if I make Cæsar, who has the wind in his sails just now, a better man?" and forebodings, only too tragically confirmed, such as that which he voiced a twelvemonth before Pharsalia: "An Iliad of troubles is at hand."† Then there are trenchant characterisations of political parties, as of the nobles, "who are in the seventh heaven if they have in their stews bearded mullets that will come and feed out of their hands," which same nobles are referred to later as "the fishpond men," as the fashionable associates of Clodius are spoken of as "the gilded youth" (*delicata juvenus*), or "the fellows with the little chin-beards" (*barbatuli*). To Pompey in particular Cicero is for ever applying nicknames suggestive of Oriental absolutism. He is *Arabarches* ("the Sheikh"), *Sampsiceramus* ("the Emir"), or *Epicrates* ("the wai-lord") "The great Panjandrum," or "the Akond of Swat" might have served the turn had Cicero been acquainted with these fascinating appellatives. Clodius is (with reference to his surname, *Pulcher*) "the pretty boy"; Clodia, "the ox-eyed" (*βόωπις*), a double-edged and scandal-hinting epithet; Antony, "the plunger" (*aleator*).

Again, the correspondence is not only a commentary; it is a self-revelation. In Atticus, a clear-headed Epicurean financier, keenly interested but not vitally concerned in the critical events of the day, Cicero found the temper

\* *Att* II. 1 6

† *Ibid* VIII xi 3

and the qualities he lacked himself. To Atticus' judgment he had recourse at all times, and especially at the great crises of his life. It is significant that when, at the close of a painful deliberation about the course he should take in the event of civil war, he imagines the moment for decision arrived, and the question put to him in his place in the Senate, the words which he fancies himself uttering are, "I agree with Cneius Pompeius, I mean Titus Pomponius." From Atticus then he had no secrets. "I speak to you," he writes, "as I do to myself." The correspondence reflects all the apprehensions, the debates, the vacillations, and the regrets of a mind irresolute, imaginative, and only too prone to consider all possible courses in every bearing, and from every point of view. Small wonder that Petrarch, who in the orator had imagined a god, felt a moment's disillusionment when his great discovery of the correspondence with Atticus revealed in the letter-writer the most wavering of mortals.\* The matter of these letters is not only political. Atticus was a family connection of Cicero, for Cicero's brother had married Atticus' sister; he was his man of business, his publisher, and shared with him his interest in literature and art. Accordingly the letters are full of family affairs, the behaviour of Cicero's wife, of Atticus' sister and her husband Quintus, the doings of the rising generation, Tullia, the young Marcus Cicero, the young Quintus. There are financial matters, literary projects and achievements, discussion of questions of orthography or Latinity, requests for books, notices of change of address. Here there is naturally no room for brilliant writing. The style, though not "telegraphic," is quite unstudied. Sub-

\* Cf A C Clark's essay on Ciceronianism in *English Literature and the Classics*, p 132

ject after subject is introduced with the informal "about so-and-so."

A special feature of the correspondence with Atticus is the free use of Greek words. Knowledge of Greek was general among cultivated Romans of the age of Cicero, and the occasional use of Greek words may be seen in the letters of some of his correspondents. That the practice was carried very much further in Cicero's letters to Atticus than in those of his contemporaries, or indeed than in his own to others than Atticus, is explained by the fact that in the latter a lover of Greek was addressing an old fellow student at Athens, who had for years made Greece his adopted country, and either from this or from Phil-Hellenism had assumed or received the surname of "the Attic." With regard to the practice as exemplified in this correspondence it may be said that Cicero uses Greek words to express things for which Latin supplied no word, or no word so neat or expressive as was readily to hand in Greek; very occasionally he does so from the mere delight of the Phil-Hellene in the Hellenic tongue. The clearest examples of the first case belong to departments such as medicine or logic, which the Greeks had made their own. But, technical terms apart, there were many ideas for the expression of which the vocabulary of the Greeks, more manifold and richer in compounds than Latin, was called into requisition by Cicero of necessity or with advantage. Especially in the case of words used with a playful or humorous connotation does he have recourse to the language of the fluent countrymen of Aristophanes, with whom the art of social intercourse, reflected in three stages of comedy, and now cultivated to the exclusion of politics, had had a much longer life than with the Romans. An analogy for the first of these

two cases is offered by French, which provides Englishmen to-day with not a few serviceable and hardly translatable phrases, and for this reason will often be found to supply the best equivalent for the Greek words used by Cicero. In the latter case one must in translating often have recourse to slang.\*

Lover of the literature as well as the language of Greece, Cicero fills these letters with Greek quotations. Homer supplies most, and how familiar they were to his correspondent and himself appears from the fact that they are oftener indicated by a word or two than given in full.† But the tragic and comic writers are not neglected. As for the Latin playwrights, in his letters as in his philosophical treatises Cicero constantly uses them to reinforce his remarks.

The "letters to friends" extend over twenty years dating from Cicero's consulship (63-43 B.C.); but neither the books nor indeed the letters themselves are arranged in chronological order. Four only consist of letters to or from a single correspondent. Those in the third are addressed to Appius Claudius Pulcher, Cicero's predecessor in the government of Cilicia, those in the fourteenth to Cicero's wife Terentia, those in the sixteenth to his freedman Tiro. The eighth consists of letters from Caelius to Cicero. The rest contain letters to more than one recipient, but are entitled primarily‡ by the

\* Prof Tyrrell (*Correspondence of Cicero*, i 67), whom I am following, seems right rather than Mr Jeans (*Life and Letters of Cicero*, pref xiii), who would always translate a Greek word by a foreign phrase whether this be a precise equivalent or not.

† οὐχ ὅσῃ φθιμένοισιν (ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν εὐχετάσθαι) or τὰς τῶν κρατούντων (ἀμαθίας φέρειν χρέων) suffice for him, as *de mortuis* (*nisi nisi bonum*) or "needs must" (when the devil drives) for us

‡ E.g. Bk. II, ad Curionem et ceteros.

name of the person, usually the principal correspondent, to whom the letters placed first in the book are addressed.

Less in bulk than the letters to Atticus, the general correspondence is on the whole inferior in interest if only because less confidential. On the other hand, it exhibits a greater diversity of character. Some of the letters, like that in which Cicero explains to Lentulus his change of attitude to the triumvirs (I. ix.), or that to Marius giving his reasons for abandoning armed resistance after the battle of Pharsalia (VII. iii), are elaborate apologies for the line he was taking in politics. Those sent from Cilicia to the Senate are official despatches; that to Cato, those to Varro Lepidus, Asinius Pollio, and Munatius Plancus written during the year 43 B.C., are diplomatic communications; and those (of the same period) to Cassius, D. Brutus, or Trebonius panegyrics on the exploit of the tyrannicides or instructions such as might be given by a government to its generals in the field. The letters of introduction and recommendation, of which the thirteenth book contains so many, have little interest beyond that of literary style. In communications such as are described above one does not look for self-revelation, and one finds, in fact, some economies of truth. Cicero's correspondence with Appius Claudius Pulcher (Book III.), who had bled the province which his successor hoped to nurse back into health, shows him using the language of compliment to a man for whom he entertained less than no respect, while the letter in which he seeks to induce Lucretius' patron Memmius to relinquish to the enthusiasts of the school "a tumbledown place," formerly belonging to Epicurus, on which Memmius had

obtained permission to build, is a model of epistolary diplomacy.\*

But there are letters of more personal interest. In the notes to Terentia, significantly shortening as the correspondence proceeds, one may see sentiment dropping from the level of "Oh that I could see you and die in your arms!" written at the time of his exile, to that of perfunctory exhortations to his wife to take care of herself, or curt directions such as "If there isn't a bath in the bathroom, put one," of a kind which a man might send to his house-keeper † The letters to Tiro reveal a tender solicitude for his health which is creditable to the writer's heart.

Everywhere one finds sympathetic and imaginative adaptivity to the temper and the circumstances of the persons addressed. In his letters to Trebatius,‡ then a budding advocate, later an eminent jurist, to whom he had given a letter of introduction to Cæsar in Gaul, Cicero cracks legal jokes interlarded with quotations from the plays and sound advice to his friend to make the most of his opportunities. He congratulates him on being the best advocate in Samarobriva, which is as though one should felicitate a friend on being the most learned lawyer in Timbuctoo, while he derides the reluctance of the enthusiastic lover of the circus to make acquaintance with the war chariots of Britain. An epistle to the invalid Marius § shows that men of refinement could find common ground in a distaste for the brutalities of the arena. The letters of the sixth book, mainly addressed to Pompeians in exile or lately restored, admirable as literary productions, breathe condolence and encouragement; while letters to Papirius Pætus,|| *bon vivant* and *litterateur*,

*Ad Fam* III 1

† Boissier, *Cicero et ses amis*.

‡ VII vi-xxii

§ VII 1

|| IX xv-xxvi



are full of gastronomic allusions and gentle raillery of him and his "Epicurean fellow-topers," and one to "Antony's boon-companion" Volumnius Eutrapelus\* shows that Cicero can be witty with the wits. With his tolerant disposition, Cicero could get on with any one, from a philosopher to a dude, from a briefless barrister to a Dictator. He is diffidently complacent at having met a somewhat notorious ballet-dancer at dinner† It is only bores like Attius and Sebosus‡ or low-down fellows like Tigellius the Sardinian§ at whom he draws the line. Such is the character of the letters of which Mommsen observed that "it is the fashion to call them interesting."

While the formal communications are more elaborate in diction, and in the structure of the sentences exhibit the characteristic Ciceronian oratorical cadence, the letters generally are written in the conversational language of the cultivated society of the day. Indeed, like persons of assured position in every age, Cicero is not afraid to descend upon occasion to what might be characterised as slang. The affinity of his diction with that of the comedians, especially Plautus, the standard of colloquial Latinity,|| has not escaped attention. But unlaboured as the letters seem to be and are, the effective arrangement of the words and their perfect adaptation to their purpose proclaim the consummate literary artist. In particular the skill with which language is handled to express the most delicate gradations of meaning or to convey the most cautious of hints is unapproached in Latin prose.¶

\* VII. xxxii.      † IX. xvi      ‡ Att. II. xv. 3.

§ VII. xxiv      || Phny, *Ép* I. xvi. 6

¶ Tyrrell, *Correspondence of Cicero*, i. p. 64

The superiority of the letters by Cicero to those by his correspondents, which appear in the collection, is unmistakable. Thus those in which Cælius kept him informed of Roman affairs while he was absent in Cilicia, while flippant, vivacious, and exhibiting all the shrewdness in political forecast with which Cicero credited him, are not impeccable in their Latinity. Yet these and some others are interesting enough for their matter. It will suffice to mention that in which Servius Sulpicius, "that mortal friend of Rome's least mortal mind," sought to console Cicero for the death of Tullia,\* and the manly refusal of Matius † to lay aside his grief for the death of his friend or his resentment against the men who had murdered him.

The unique value of Cicero's works on rhetoric is that in them we have theory expounded by a master of practice. Cicero is the only one of the world's great orators who has set himself to reveal the secret of his art. The more important of his works on oratory present to us not the teaching of the schools, but the lessons which he had learned by actual experience. It is true that both as student and as instructor he produced books on formal rhetoric. His first essay (*De Inventione*), which he afterwards described slightly as "rough jottings from the note-books of my boyhood and youth," was based on the current rhetorical system of Hermagoras, and often coincides with the almost contemporary treatise addressed to Herennius (p. 112). The "divisions of oratory" (*partitiones oratoriarum*) is a succinct art of oratory in the form of answers to questions put by his son, for whose benefit the work was written; while in the latest of his rhetorical books, the *Topica*, or "heads of argu-

\* *Ad Fam.* IV. v.

† *Ibid.* XI. xxviii.

ment," an explanation of Aristotle's treatise of that name written during an eight days' voyage at the request of his friend Trebatius, he deals again with the subject of his earliest work.

But in the great triad of rhetorical works, consisting of two dialogues and an essay, the *De Oratore*, *Brutus*, and *Orator*, while the definitions and classifications of the treatises on formal rhetoric are presupposed, or briefly alluded to as constituting the alphabet of the art, the subject of eloquence is treated on more liberal lines as well as in more attractive forms. The chief speakers in the first-named discussion are Crassus and Antonius, the most eminent of Cicero's predecessors. At the outset Crassus is made to insist on the wide knowledge necessary for excellence in oratory, for the orator may be called upon to speak on any subject, and he must not speak without knowledge. Antonius has a less exalted conception of the orator, and holds that efficiency may be best attained within narrower limits. Antonius' practical point of view is further exemplified in the second book, in which he deals with the discovery of arguments and arrangement. He brushes aside some of the subdivisions of the rhetoricians as inept, rejects some of their rules as artificial, and gives a few common-sense directions which have stood the test of experience. Crassus has not been convinced by the criticism of Antonius, and in the third book, before setting forth the topics of style and delivery, he proceeds further to enlarge the domain of oratory by insisting on the intimate relations between eloquence and philosophy. It is Crassus who in the main gives expression to Cicero's own views; but Antonius too contributes something towards the conclusions intended to be drawn. Cicero is careful to point out (Book II.

ii. 4.) that both were men of wider knowledge than was commonly supposed. From their contending views there emerges a conception of oratorical education more extended in range than any which had been hitherto entertained, yet corrected on its systematic side by the practical experience of successful orators, and thus equally removed from mere empiricism and the pedantry of the schools. As regards its execution, the *De Oratore* has been pronounced by Newman "perhaps the most finished" of Cicero's works, and it was highly approved by the author himself. The characters of the speakers are well maintained, and if they are a trifle heavy and require a considerable expenditure of compliment to get them under way, yet it must be admitted that the subject gains in interest by being thrown into a dramatic form.

In the *De Oratore* Cicero had indicated the education by which he considered that oratorical excellence could best be attained. In the *Brutus*, in which, assisted by Atticus and Marcus Brutus, he takes the leading part himself, he considers how far it has been achieved in the past. After a brief sketch of Greek oratory, he proceeds to a review of Roman orators on a more elaborate scale. It was not his intention to say anything himself about persons still living; accordingly he leaves the criticism of Cato to his nephew Brutus, and that of Cæsar to Atticus. Later he speaks of some younger orators, recently dead, and in connection with one of them, Calvus, corrects the mistaken views of the self-styled "Atticists." These, identifying Attic oratory with correctness and plainness, which last was but one of its qualities, confined themselves for the most part to the imitation of Lysias, in whom plainness was pre-eminent. Thus they eschewed

ornament and rhythm, with the result that they found themselves speaking to empty benches.

It may be mentioned here parenthetically that the purpose of the *De optimo genere oratorum*, a brief preface to a translation of the speeches of Æschines against Ctesiphon and Demosthenes *On the Crown*, was to direct attention to models more representative of Attic oratory, because, while equally correct, they had greater variety of tones. Precise and careful as are the appreciations of the various speakers given in the *Brutus*, in the absence of speeches by reference to which they might be tested the long series of orators passed in review gives the reader somewhat of the same impression of bewilderment as a gallery containing nothing but "portraits of persons unknown." Nevertheless, Cicero's account of his rival Hortensius is most interesting, though less so than the passage where, departing from his intention of avoiding reference to the living, he tells the story of his own strenuous oratorical training.

In the *Orator* Cicero completes the cycle of his greater rhetorical works by drawing the portrait of the ideal orator. In view of the necessity for minute and technical discussion, he prefers the form of the essay to that of the dialogue.

That the ideal orator will select his arguments with judgment and arrange them with care is soon said. It is on the manner rather than the matter of his speeches, which he will not fail to commend by appropriate voice and gesture, that attention is concentrated. He will know how to prove, to please, and to persuade, and with these objects will have at command the three styles, the plain, the intermediate, and the grand, using each as circumstances shall require, under the guidance of good sense

which is the foundation of eloquence. Equipped with a knowledge of logic and philosophy, law and history, he will devote especial attention to the treatment of character and to pathetic appeal. His language will be choice, dignified, and freely metaphorical, embellished by figures of speech and figures of thought. The structure of his sentences will be balanced yet free from otiose addition, rhythmical without declining into metre, periodic yet diversified by broken rhythms (*incisa*) and brief clauses embodying but a part of the orator's thought (*membra*)

It is in postulating a command of the intermediate and the grand styles as well as the plain, and in the treatment of the period, that the polemical character of the treatise appears. It was, in fact, written to meet the criticisms and, if possible, effect the conversion of Brutus, who was an adherent of the Attic school.

While in the *Brutus* Cicero had sought to refute the "Atticists" by pointing to their ill-success, in the "Orator" he justifies oratorical rhythm as satisfying a natural craving of the ear, and gives some explanation of the methods by which it may be achieved. That Cicero illustrates his recommendations by reference to his own practice and by quotations from his own speeches is not to be interpreted as meaning that he had attained his own ideal. Indeed, he asserts the contrary. But his object was to use example rather than precept, and for this purpose his own orations supplied the fullest and most available source. "There is," he says, "no rhetorical merit of whatever kind which is, I do not say realised, but at any rate attempted, in my speeches" (§ 103). The method which he has followed does not detract from the merits of a treatise on which he was

willing to stake his reputation as a critic of oratory, and of which an accomplished editor has observed that it may be regarded as the best specimen of rhetorical criticism which we possess in the whole range of Latin literature.\*

But eloquence is not to be learnt from books, and the philosophical works of Cicero, inferior in finish but greater in volume and more universal in appeal, have exercised far more influence than his treatises on rhetoric. With the exception of his "Republic" (*De Republica*, 54-3 B.C.) "Laws" (*De Legibus*, 52 B.C.) and the "Paradoxes" (*Paradoxa*, 46 B.C.), the whole of these were produced in about a year and a half.† The two first of these works hardly form an exception, for though they owe inspiration, form, and titles to the "Republic" and the "Laws of Plato," they are political rather than philosophical in character. The best form of government, which it is the object of the dialogue on the "Republic" to discover, is no imaginary one, but that of the Roman Republic as it existed in the days of the principal interlocutors Scipio the younger and Lælius, a happy combination, so the writer conceived, of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy, while the "Laws" provided for this enviable state are based on the Twelve Tables and other legislation actually enacted at Rome.

The more distinctively philosophical parts of these two books are the dream of Scipio in the "Republic," which corresponds with the vision of Er the Armemian in the Platonic prototype, and the disquisition about law with which the *De Legibus* opens. Yet even these

Sir J. E. Sandys, *Orator*, Intro lxxi

† Between February 45, the death of Tullia, and November 44, the date of the publication of the *De Officiis*.

have a practical bearing. The purpose of the first, in which the elder Scipio discourses on the immortality of the soul, is to rouse his grandson to labour for his country; while the object of the second is to dignify the laws of Rome as being the expression (how, precisely, is not shown) of a law inherent in the nature of things.

If the "Republic" and the "Laws" belong to Cicero's political rather than to his philosophical works, the "Paradoxes" (*Paradoxa*, 46 B.C.), a little treatise setting forth in a plausible light and in popular language some paradoxes of the Stoic school is, as the author says, rhetorical in character. But dedicated, like four of the philosophical works which followed it, to Marcus Brutus, who gave Cicero an impulse in this direction, it marks the transition to the works on philosophy. The death of his daughter Tullia and the extinction of the hopes of the Pompeian party by the battle of Munda, both occurring in 45 B.C., definitely turned Cicero to the studies to which he refers as "long intermitted but never forgotten." In them he primarily sought consolation for personal and political troubles, and this helps to explain the practical manner in which they were pursued. But he also conceived the idea of making the results of Greek philosophical thought accessible to his countrymen, and therewith challenging the literary supremacy of Greece in the one department in which she still retained a monopoly. The result was an encyclopædia of philosophy, the order of the several works which embodied it being to some extent determined by the circumstances mentioned above.

First among them were the lost "Consolation," a translation of the philosopher Crantor's treatise on grief (*περὶ πένθους*) and the "Hortensius," also lost, an apology



for the study of philosophy dedicated to Cicero's former rival in the law courts. These were followed by the *Academica*, which may be regarded as an introduction to the study of philosophy, both as containing a compendious sketch of the history of that study, and as dealing with the preliminary question "is certitude possible?" The "Academics" were written first in two books (*Academica priora*), entitled respectively by the names of the chief speakers, Catulus and Lucullus. Later, partly because he thought that these two persons, who had had but a superficial acquaintance with philosophy, were unsuited for the discussion of its somewhat abstruse topics, partly because he wished to dedicate some treatise to Varro, Cicero recast the work in what he considered a far superior form in four books (*Academica posteriora*), assigning the principal parts to Varro, Atticus, and himself.

We possess only the second book of the first version, and the first (defective at the close) of the second. In the latter Varro gives a sketch of the history of the schools deriving from Plato, incorrectly including among them that of Zeno of Citium, down to Carneades (214-129 B C), leader of the New or sceptical Academy, at which point the work breaks off. In the former Lucullus\* maintains the trustworthiness of the senses and the consequent possibility of acquiring certain knowledge, while Cicero attacks both these positions, reinforcing his arguments by a demonstration of the

\* He uses the arguments of Antiochus (*fl. circ.* 80 B C), founder of the Reformed Academy. Reacting against the scepticism of the New Academy, Antiochus sought to combine Academic, Peripatetic, and Stoic views in certain positive principles which he considered to be contained in the teaching of Plato.

wide divergencies between the different philosophic schools.

After the method the matter of philosophy. The five books of the *De Finibus* contain a discussion of the teaching of the leading schools as to the supreme good and the supreme evil. The exposition of Torquatus (Book I) of the Epicurean view that pleasure is the greatest good and pain the greatest evil is vigorously assailed by Cicero (Book II), who uses Stoic arguments, as, for instance, that the primary instinct of nature is not pleasure but self-preservation, and that the Epicurean doctrine is fatal to honesty, temperance, courage, and friendship. Then Cato (Book III) expounds the Stoic teaching that virtue is the only good; that the virtuous, that is the wise man, is always happy, and that all good things are equally good, all bad things equally bad. This exposition Cicero (Book IV) criticises, but with less acrimony than he had displayed against the Epicureans. He maintains that virtue though the highest is not the only good, and contends that the Stoics are inconsistent in starting from the primary instincts and then excluding them from their definition of the highest good. Finally (Book V) M. Pupius Piso explains the doctrine of the old Academicians and the Peripatetics, who, he declared, agreed in making virtue the highest good, but seeing that man was body as well as soul made room in their definition for the gratification of natural instincts and for external blessings, though rating them very much lower than virtue.

On this Cicero has not much criticism to offer, for indeed he had himself to some extent used the same arguments, which were those of Antiochus, leader of the reformed Academy, in the preceding book; but he expresses fears that on this view virtue is not entirely secure of happi-

ness, and admiration for the more heroic position taken up by Stoicism. The opinions expressed by Cicero himself as to the method and the matter of philosophy are tentative, yet they may be serviceable in application to life. The five books of Tusculan questions or disputations (*Tusculanae quaestiones* or *disputationes*), dialogues between Cicero and a youth, probably representing his son Marcus, conducted at his villa at Tusculum, deal with practical problems such as the contempt of death and the endurance of pain.

It may at first sight seem surprising that at this point Cicero undertook to produce two books on what may be called the philosophy of religion. But in the ancient conception of philosophy religion formed a part of physics, and for a complete presentation of the field of philosophy it was necessary that Cicero should deal with physics as well as dialectics and ethics. Apart from this the questions raised were of practical interest to the Romans of his day, who, influenced as they were by the freethought of the Greeks, were yet called upon to discharge the observances of the official religion which were part of the machinery of the state.

In the work on "The Nature of the Gods (*de Natura deorum*)," Velleius (Book I) sets forth the Epicurean conception of an atomic universe, already made known to us by Lucretius (p. 124). The gods exist, and, according to the "anticipations" formed of them by mankind, exist in human form, but being according to the same anticipations happy, they do nothing, and certainly do not concern themselves with mankind. As for the views of other philosophers Velleius arrogantly characterises them as "dreams of the demented." The Pontifex Maximus Cotta, who criticises Velleius (Book II) from the point of view of the New

Academy, is as urbane as the latter is blatant. He concedes that the existence of the gods is possible; but contends that the argument drawn from general consensus is a bad one. As for their nature, they are not made of atoms, or they would not be immortal. The notion of their having human form is due to the influence of artistic representations. If the gods do nothing what do they want with hands and feet? Happiness is impossible without action, nor have do-nothing deities any claim to reverence. The Stoic Balbus (Book III) as evidence for the existence of gods, supplements universal belief by the indications given by the gods themselves in their appearances, and intimations of future events, by the presence of order in the universe, and of reason in man. As to their nature, it is, like that of the whole universe, divine. In support of his next contention that the gods rule the world, Balbus proceeds to develop the argument from design drawn from the consideration of the manifold wonders of the world. What Scythian or Briton, he asks, confronted with the orrery of Posidonius, but would pronounce it a work of reason? Much more then is that of which it is a representation. Finally, to omit further proofs, he argues that it was for man that all these things were made, and made by a Providence which extends its care to nations, cities, and, occasional mishaps notwithstanding,\* to individuals.

Cotta protests against invoking the opinions of the vulgar, and against the acquiescence of the Stoics in a superstitious polytheism. The possession of reason by man does not prove that the universe is ruled by Providence, for it is no blessing, but a curse. To the Stoic rejoinder that it is a good gift misapplied he replies that a provident God

\* *Magna di curant parva negligunt*, xi § 167.

would not have given man a faculty of which he must have foreseen the misuse. Finally he points out that the wicked often prosper and the good are afflicted. If it be said that the sins of parents are visited on their children, what kind of justice is this? "Not proven" is Cotta's verdict on Balbus' contention as to the divine government of the world and the care of the gods for men. Velleius agrees with him, but Cicero declares that the balance of probability rests with Balbus.

The existence of the gods, however, even Cotta is prepared to concede, and if they exist it becomes important to know whether their wishes and intentions may be ascertained. This is the purpose of the two books on Divination (*De Divinatione*). They purport to give the substance of a discussion between Cicero and his brother Quintus at the Tusculan villa of the former. The Stoics argued that if the gods existed they must be willing to communicate to mankind knowledge so material to their happiness as that of future events. Accordingly they accepted the current methods of divination in two kinds: natural, through dreams and ecstasies; artificial, through the observation of entrails, the flight of birds, lightning, and other portents. This is the doctrine set forth by Quintus Cicero in the first book. It is criticised by his brother in the second. After examining in turn each of the methods described by Quintus, he declares that there is no such thing as divination.

If man may not discover his future, he may do something to make it. In the treatise on Destiny (*De Fato*), of which the opening and the close are lost, Cicero discusses the problem of Fate and Free-will, under the form of a discourse delivered at his request to Hirtius, one of the two consuls who were to fall in 43 B.C. He is in sym-

pathy with Chrysippus' tentative efforts to reconcile the two, but does not consider them successful. Not that he can reconcile the antinomy himself; but while recognising the existence of a divine power which fore-ordains events he is emphatic in his belief in the freedom of man to do well or ill. Such a postulate is the condition of moral responsibility; and so this, the third of the works on the philosophy of religion, is followed by three on the conduct of life. The two first of these, dedicated by Cicero to his friend Atticus, set forth the right attitude to old age (*De Senectute*) and the right use of friendship (*De Amicitia*). The last is a manual of morality addressed by him to his son, then a student at the University of Athens.

The *De Senectute*, a dialogue between Cato and the two friends, Scipio the younger and Lælius, in which Cato takes the leading part, is at once the most graceful and the most methodically arranged of Cicero's dialogues. The four charges brought against old age—that it removes us from affairs, weakens the body, deprives us of almost all the pleasures, and is near to death—are successively met. Age, as examples show, can render service by counsel. "If you cannot climb the rigging," Cato says in effect,\* "you can hold the helm." Authority, "the crown of years," † may compensate for loss of physical strength, though even this temperance can do much to retain. In relation to pleasure, old age is to be regarded as an emancipation rather than a deprivation. Nor does old age lack its pleasures, those, to wit, of the intellect, which are superior to sensual delights, or the pursuit of agriculture, on which the author of "Country Life" (p. 97) fittingly enlarges with enthusiasm and insight. As for the nearness of old age to death, death comes to young as well as old,

*De Sen.* § 17    † *Apex est senectutis auctoritas*    *De Sen.* § 60

and the latter have had the advantage of more time to prepare for it. Death itself, if followed by annihilation, is indifferent, if by immortality desirable. The latter is the conviction entertained by the speaker, who eloquently exclaims: "O glorious day when I shall set forth to join that company of souls divine, and bid farewell to the tumult and confusion here!"

The *De Amicitia* claims to be no imaginary discourse, but a conversation actually held by Lælius a few days after the death of his friend Scipio with his two sons-in-law, and related by one of them, Q. Mucius Scævola, to Cicero, who as a young man had been placed under his direction. As to the plan of the book, Lælius does in effect, though not without repetitions, do what Fannius asks him to do (§ 16), namely, say what he thinks about friendship and what he considers its nature to be and give some rules regarding it. Opening with a eulogy of friendship (§§ 17-25), he declares that it has its origin not in the weakness of mankind, and therefore not in self-interest, but in love, and that it can only subsist between the virtuous; and concludes by indicating its limits, as, for example, that we must neither do wrong for our friends nor ask them to do wrong for us, and by inculcating caution in the choice of friends, the necessity for mutual respect, for candour, tact, and the avoidance of flattery.

Less lucid in arrangement than the treatise on Old Age, the discourse on Friendship is on the whole not so successful. The personality of Lælius is less arresting than that of Cato, and perhaps something of the fine aroma of friendship evaporates on analysis. Yet the noble subject is finely treated. The definition of the friend as "a second self" (*alter idem*) and that of friend-

ship as "complete agreement on all subjects human and divine" accompanied by goodwill and affection, suffice to show that a high standard is set up

In the three books on Duties (*De Officiis*), which aim at instruction rather than enquiry, Cicero abandons the didactic form. The subject of the first book is the honourable (*honestum*), manifested in the four virtues of Prudence, Justice, Courage, and Temperance. The author enlarges particularly on the second of these virtues, of which he finds the foundation in honour (*fides*) or sincerity in speech and fidelity to engagements. The object of the second book is to prove that the expedient (*utile*) is inseparable from the honourable. The third book deals with cases in which there is a conflict between the honourable and the expedient. If the reasoning in the preceding book be correct it is only in appearance that such cases can arise. But what the truly honourable and the truly expedient may be it is not given to every man to recognise. The criterion recommended is this; we ought to avoid all action by which we profit to the detriment of another. Its efficacy the author confirms by illustrations drawn from public and private life. No advantage can compensate for the least infringement of justice.

The style of the *De Officiis* has less amplitude than most of Cicero's philosophical works, but the special merit of the books is the large humanity which pervades it. The writer extends our obligations to those who have wronged us and to slaves. He protests against useless cruelty in war, and does not adopt the barbarous prejudice which would establish impassable barriers between the citizens of different countries. The generosity of the just man considers not the position but the needs



of those who claim it. The principle which dominates the whole treatise is that men were born for each other, and that the good man should do all in his power to tighten the bonds of this natural society, because the basis of justice is our inborn impulse to mutual love.

Of the philosophical works which close with this treatise the most diverse estimates have been formed. They have been dismissed by Mommsen as examples of mere book-making, *rechauffés* according to an easy recipe, of Greek text-books provided with an appropriate *mise-en-scène* and prefaced by an introduction of which the writer kept a stock on hand. On the other hand, an enthusiastic admirer of Cicero\* has declared that those eighteen months during which he was at times "writing for whole days together" were among the most momentous in the history of civilisation.

Some warrant may be found for the former view. The originals on which Cicero's treatises were based can in the great majority of cases be identified. And it is possible to point to Cicero's own words: "They are transcripts I just supply the words, and of these I have plenty" † But he is writing here with the same ironic depreciation with which he has in another passage referred to his oratorical efforts, ‡ as though seeking to amuse his correspondent by admitting him into the tricks of the trade. Elsewhere § he claims that in the selection of the arguments he uses his own judgment. Not that he was an original thinker, much less the founder of a school. It is not even correct to describe him as an eclectic, || for eclecticism implies the con-

Zielinski, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte*.

† *Att.* XII. lii 3

‡ *Ibid.* I xiv 2, II i i

§ *Tusc.* IV iv 7

|| Reid, *Academica*, Intro

struction of a philosophical system from elements selected from different quarters, and Cicero did not construct a system. So far as he was anything he was an adherent of the New Academy ; and the followers of Carneades, taking probability for their guide, approved what they thought most probable at the moment, and did not consider themselves bound by opinions they might previously have expressed. Except in this sense he was not even a consistent Academician, for while he approves the Academic standpoint in the theoretical part of philosophy, when he comes to ethics he is at times ready to commit himself more than the strict tenets of the school would permit. In declaring a preference he adds, "but let us not be overheard by the Academy, for if she rushes in with her destructive criticisms what havoc will she not create !" With the eternal hesitations of the New Academy he is at times a little impatient, and is attracted by the heroic if often pedantic and unpractical attitude of the Stoics. Indeed, there is something, he thinks, to be learnt from all the schools, between which there is more agreement than their respective adherents are willing to admit. Only with the Epicureans, "whom he stigmatises as plebeian philosophers," will he have nothing to do ; because Epicureanism is unworthy of the dignity of human nature and incompatible with good citizenship.

But this indifference about consistency is quite reconcilable with Cicero's aim, which was to place the results of Greek thought before his countrymen in their own language, and to make them serviceable for the conduct of life. His purpose is practical for his readers as for himself. "How far I have helped others," he says, "it would be hard to say ; for my own poignant sufferings

no other alleviation could have been found." \* In this purpose he has surely succeeded to admiration. It is not indeed every one who, like Petrarch, will find in the second book of the *Tusculans* a most effectual remedy against the tortures of the gout. But so eloquent, so sensible, and so profoundly moral is Cicero's treatment of questions which must always interest humanity that a distinguished Ciceronian scholar † has not hesitated to declare that his philosophical treatises "have had greater influence upon life and thought than any other works upon philosophy, whether ancient or modern."

How this influence was exerted this is not the place to explain. Suffice it to say that it became most dominant with the diffusion of Christianity, when Christian apologists found weapons against pagan superstition in the *De Divinatione* and the *De Natura deorum*, and a Christian bishop matter for a treatise on the duties of deacons in "Tully's Offices"; and again in the seventeenth century, when for the most part the books already mentioned supplied arguments for a natural religion purged of the miraculous to a long succession of deistic philosophers from Lord Herbert of Cherbury to Locke and Hume.

The influence of Cicero's style has proved even more pervasive than that of his matter. His most distinctive achievement was the perfection of the period (that is to say, the composite sentence in which the principal statement is reserved till the end), primarily for oratorical purposes. Continuous practice and diligent study of Greek masters, especially Isocrates, who of all the

*Tusc.* v 121

† Prof A. C. Clark, *Ciceronianism in English Literature and the Classics*, p. 119, to whom I am indebted for the substance of the following paragraph

Greeks had given most attention to the question of prose rhythm, enabled him to profit by the inheritance bequeathed him by his predecessors, such as Crassus and Antonius, who more by nature than art had attained on occasions to effective periodic structure. As an orator Cicero's paramount aim was to be understood, and his desire not so much to surprise as to satisfy expectation. This aim is reflected in the balance and correspondence of his clauses. But he does more than inform the mind; he charms the ear. No one can read a succession of Ciceronian sentences without being aware of the rhythmical and harmonious cadence of their close. The methods by which this effect was attained Cicero has made some attempt to explain. He declared that the language of oratory should be rhythmical, but not metrical, that is to say, that while it observed a certain system of beats, it should avoid those quantitative dispositions which have been specially followed in poetry. He also noted the effectiveness of the cretic foot (— — —) towards the close of a sentence, and instanced with admiration one of Crassus' periods which terminated with two trochees,\* remarking that an inversion in the order of the words would infallibly have spoiled their effect. But "it was reserved for a Polish professor of the twentieth century"† to discover and classify the methods which the orator unconsciously practised or dimly guessed. At the close of the Ciceronian period (such is Zielinski's law) there is a cretic basis, consisting of a cretic foot or its metrical equivalent, followed by a cadence trochaic in character but of varying length. Two of four forms in

*Patris dictum filii temeritas comprobavit* Orator 63, 214

† Sir J. T. Sandys in his article on "Lat. Prose-writers" in the *Companion to Latin Studies*.

which this principle is manifested account for eighty-six per cent. of Cicero's oratorical periods. The principle holds good in the philosophical and rhetorical writings \* and in the more elaborate letters, and can be traced, with modifications, in Pliny and Seneca, but not, it may be observed, in the Atticist Cæsar.

The Ciceronian style is susceptible of abuse. There is the temptation to secure balance by amplifications which add nothing to the thought, and there is the danger of fatiguing the ear by an unvaried succession of elaborate sentences. The former Cicero noted as a fault in the Asiatic oratory and learned to eschew ; from the latter he was saved by his instinct as an orator. On the importance of varying long sentences with short he lays especial stress. But impossible as is the Ciceronian style to reproduce in its perfection without the gift of a fine ear, its magic is irresistible. First realised in oratory, where it culminated in the eloquence of the parliamentary giants of the eighteenth century, it has found innumerable exponents among English writers, a Sidney, a Hooker, a Gibbon, a Newman, and with whatever modifications remains the basis of finished modern prose.

The style of these does not differ from that of the orations except as being quieter in movement and less varied by brief sentences.

## VIII

### CÆSAR, SALLUST, AND VARRO

ALMOST the only department of literature unattempted by Cicero was history. It was a subject to which not a few of the public men of the last period of the Republic who were also men of letters gave their attention. Prominent among these was the greatest of them all, C. JULIUS CÆSAR. The most important of his productions \* survive in seven books of "Notes" (*Commentarii*) on the Gallic, and three on the Civil war. The former contain a record of seven campaigns in Gaul (58-52 B.C.), including two expeditions to Britain (55-54 B.C.). The latter narrate the events of the years 49-48 B.C., that is to say, the retirement of Pompey from Italy and the overthrow of the Pompeians in Spain (Book I), the capture of Massilia in the Gallic province balanced by the defeat and death of Curio in Africa (Book II), and the circumvallation of Pompey at Dyrrachium followed by his defeat at Pharsalia (Book III). Cæsar concludes by describing how he crossed to Egypt and became involved in the Alexandrine war. The composition of this work was probably interrupted by the author's death

Lost are an encomium on Hercules, A Tragedy (*Œdipus*), both youthful works, two books on analogy, two polemical pamphlets (*Anti-Catones*) in reply to post-mortem eulogies on Cato, and a poetical account (*iter*) of his journey from Rome to Spain when he was on his way to his final conflict with the sons of Pompey

Records of great deeds by the doer, the *Commentaries*, and especially those on the Gallic war, are very notable books. To a Frenchman the story of the valorous resistance of his country to the power which has influenced it so profoundly is necessarily of enthralling interest, and no English reader can remain indifferent when through Cæsar's eyes he catches a first glimpse of the cliffs of Britain rising so steeply from the sea that a javelin thrown from their summit would fall upon the beach below.

But they are essentially a *précis* of military operations, and it is by soldiers, a Condé or a Napoleon, that they have been most appreciated. To the ordinary reader the procession of campaigns may seem monotonous and the outlook narrow. A sentence or two on each tribe as he comes in contact with it, some general remarks on the political and religious conditions obtaining in Gaul, with which those of Germany are briefly contrasted (VI. 11-28), these and three chapters on the inhabitants and geography of Great Britain (V. 12-14) are all the digressions which Cæsar allows himself. With the romantic or the picturesque he has nothing to do. As to matters outside his observation he is cautious. On the report that in the Hebrides the nights in winter last a month, he observes that he has ascertained nothing about this; careful measurements on the water-clock, however, show that they are longer in Britain than on the Continent. Only with reference to the unexplored Hercynian Forest does he repeat some surprising hearsay statements, as that its fauna include unicorns, wild oxen about the size of elephants, and alks (*alces*) or elks, which, having no joints in their legs, rest themselves by leaning against trees, and so may be conveniently secured by cutting

half-way through the trunks in the vicinity of their harbours.

The literary descent of the *Commentaries* is from the military memoirs of Alexander's generals, which seem to have been straightforward narratives, in marked contrast to those so-called histories in which the exploits of Alexander had been magnified in an atmosphere of romance.\* And such is the aspect which they wear themselves. The impression of detachment made by the use of the third person throughout, the strict adherence to chronological order, the absence of emotion, the exclusion of reflections, and last, not least, the simple lucid style, with its studious avoidance of any kind of affectation, combine to produce the conviction that here we have an unbiased record of events as they befell.

But Cæsar's position and his motives in writing were very different from those of Ptolemy or Nearchus. Raised by a party vote to a command which he regarded but as a stepping-stone to power, he was concerned in the report of his operations in Gaul incidentally to disarm the criticisms of Senatorial opponents, but more particularly to show that he had done great services to his country and thereby to enlist support in the struggle which he foresaw. In his notes on the Civil war it was his aim to represent that if he had invaded his country and subverted its constitution, this part had been forced upon him despite his efforts by the irreconcilable opposition of the Senatorial party. With these objects in view, he does not, indeed, do violence to facts, but he does emphasise certain points and practise certain reticences. In the Gallic war he is careful on each occasion to point out that his forward policy is dictated not by personal ambition, but

\* Prof Bury, *Greek Historians*, p 176.



by exigencies of defence, traditional principles of Roman policy, or at the least by the requirements of the offensive defensive. It is true he does not conceal that his treatment of his barbarous opponents was ruthless and, on occasions, treacherous. But the standard of public opinion at Rome was not high, and Cato's opinion that he deserved to be handed over to the enemy for his perfidious behaviour to the Usipetes and Teucteri found no support. Yet if Suetonius be correct in saying that there were occasions when he allowed his troops to sack cities which were willing to surrender, Cæsar does not mention these himself. But if it was his purpose to produce the impression of great achievements and an even appalling efficiency, he has unquestionably attained it. It is natural that the account of the struggle should exhibit more feeling than that of the years of preparation by which it was preceded. One has only to turn from the opening of the Gallic campaigns, with its tranquil statement that "all Gaul is divided into three parts," to that of the Civil war, which records without preface the difficulty of getting Cæsar's letter to the Senate read, and the impossibility of procuring a motion in accordance with the sense of it, to realise that one has passed into a more heated atmosphere.

In the sequel there is some restrained sarcasm over the hasty assumption of the Pompeians that their success at Dyrrachium had absolved them from thinking about the further conduct of the campaign, and the effeminate camp-appointments of the men who had thought fit to charge his own battered and long-suffering soldiers with luxury. On the whole, however, the prevailing impression given is that of calmness. There is, indeed, in each work the same pride in the exploits of the troops ; in the object-

lesson of the value of presence of mind given by the veterans who extricated themselves from an apparently hopeless position off Lissus (*B.C.* iii. 28), as in the generous rivalry of the two centurions (*B.G.* v. 44) who saved each other's lives in turn. But the tragic death of Cæsar's great rival (*B.C.* iii. 104) is recorded with the same businesslike curtness and absence of comment as the public-spirited self-surrender of the heroic Vercingetorix (*B.G.* vii 89).

Of the supplements in which the tale of Cæsar's achievements is carried on by various authors,\* in narratives of dwindling merit and increasing detail, little need be said. Cæsar's lieutenant Hirtius concluded the record of the operations in Gaul, which grow less interesting towards their close, in a style which for simplicity and conciseness is no bad imitation of that of his chief. The notes on the Alexandrine war, despite some stylistic resemblances to the supplement to the Gallic commentaries, are now held by good authorities† not to have been by Hirtius. In the difficulties of Cæsar at Alexandria and his phenomenally rapid defeat of Pharnaces the author had a more promising subject than Hirtius, and his narrative is correspondingly more lively. The events of the African war, culminating in the battle of Thapsus, are recounted by one who took part in the campaign, and perhaps belonged to the fifth legion, since special attention is given to the exploits of that corps. More ambitious it is less able than the work on the Alexandrine

Hirtius writes (*B.G.* viii 1) as if he had completed the series himself, but except in the case of the 8th book of the Gallic commentaries it is unlikely that he did more than edit it, and this in a very limited sense

† Dr J S Reid, *Journal of Class Phil* iii No 4, 1908, p 442

war. As for the notes on the Spanish war style and treatment alike show them to have been written by an ill-educated subordinate. A manner of writing bald and often ungrammatical is sometimes oddly adorned by tags of Ennius, while daily happenings are recounted to the exclusion of a general view of events. To return to the undoubted work of Cæsar

Cicero, who was a good judge but wished to pay a compliment, praises the *Commentaries* as possessing the unadorned beauty of a nude statue.\* Hirtius, an enthusiastic admirer, declares that their unstudied grace is universally admitted to surpass the most elaborate efforts of all other writers † In effect they are written in a style lucid, terse and vigorous, though here and there exhibiting traces of the speed at which the last-named writer tells us they were composed. Making no attempt at rhetorical effect or rhythmical flow, they have a certain distinction in their entire absence of affectation. It is no surprise to find that their author laid down as the first maxim of style, "avoid a new or unusual word as you would a rock." Yet though Cicero truly says that sensible men would hesitate to try to improve upon them, the *Commentaries* with their comparatively limited aim and restricted outlook are not a history, certainly not an artistic history. For this we must look among the historians by profession.

The writing of comprehensive annalistic records of Roman history still continued, though the popularising tendency noted in the annalists of the Sullan period is supplemented or replaced by an effort to utilise the earliest available written documents. Gaius Licinius

Cic. *Brutus*, s. 262

† *B.G.*, viii. præf.

Macer\* (tribune in 73 B.C.), father of the poet Calvus, had, in his annals from the foundation of Rome to his own day, supported his statements by reference to certain linen rolls (*libri lintei*) preserved in the temple of Moneta on the Capitol, and Q. Ælius Tubero,† who fought for Pompey against Cæsar as a young man, checked and corrected in the annals he wrote in later life the use of these documents by Macer.

But there were others who followed the example set by Asellio (p. 101) in the treatment of limited periods of recent history in a reasoned manner. P. Cornelius Sisenna (119-67 B.C.) wrote a history of the Social and the first Civil war ending with the death of Sulla, thus providing a continuation of Asellio's work. His distinct superiority to his predecessors is recognised by Cicero and Sallust, and Sisenna's careful work presented certain features, philosophic introductions, an arrangement artistic rather than chronological, and a stressing of individual personalities round which facts and events were grouped, in which he showed the way to his immediate successor. But a weakness for puerile anecdotes which Cicero notes in Sisenna makes it doubtful whether had his work survived it would have placed him on the same level. For C. CRISPUS SALLUSTIUS, of Amiternum‡ (86-36 B.C.) was too clever a man to be capable of puerility. One of the younger generation of latter-day Republicans like Cælius and Curio, men in whom Cæsar found useful but not always judicious

Fragments in Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*, I pp 300, 599

† Op cit cccxlv. Fragments, I pp 311, 399

‡ In the Sabine territory. Mommsen's observation that the most original Latin writers were of Sabine stock is supported by the names of Lucilius, Sallust, Horace, and Varro.

supporters, he early entered a political career. Tribune in 53 B.C. he took part in the faction fights between Clodius and Milo, and fanned the excitement on the death of the former, which found vent in the burning of the Senate House.

His expulsion from the Senate three years later on the ground of immorality was perhaps mainly due to political motives, but the manner of his life had lent plausibility to the pretext. When Cæsar gained the ascendancy Sallust became quæstor a second time, to recover his seat in the Senate. As quæstor he did useful service in the African war, and was rewarded by the position of proconsul and governor of Numidia. Here he amassed immense wealth at the expense of the provincials, and returning to Rome bought an extensive piece of ground on the Quirinal, afterwards famous as "the gardens of Sallust," and built a house which a succession of emperors were well content to use as a palace. After the death of Cæsar he took no part in politics. Remembering with bitterness the set-back to his career (*Cat.* 3. 5, 4. 1) and ill-pleased with some of the associates whom the triumph of democracy had made his fellow members in the Senate (*B. J.* 4. 4) he was little inclined to take a hand in the struggle which followed the death of his chief. As an intellectual he despised the "servile occupations" of sport and agriculture, and sought a substitute for political life in treating brief periods of Roman history selected for their importance. His choice betrays his democratic predilections. First came an account of the Catilinarian conspiracy, an episode within his own memory which impressed the Romans as symptomatic of a deep-seated social discontent. Tracing this antagonism further back he was then attracted to the

Jugurthine war by the fact that in it the arrogance of the nobility received its first check. Finally, in his "Histories," an account of the twelve years succeeding the death of Sulla (78-66 B.C.), he traced the overthrow of the Sullan constitution down to the moment when the prospects of the democratic party were temporarily clouded by the appointment of Pompey with extraordinary powers to the conduct of the Mithridatic war.\*

The "Histories" (*Historiarum libri quinque*) are almost entirely lost. Four speeches, a violent denunciation of the Sullan regime by the revolutionary Lepidus, a vigorous appeal for strong measures against him by a senatorial opponent, a desponding address by a consul of the party of moderate reform, and an astute exhortation by a democratic tribune, who urges the people to bring the Senate to their knees by withholding military service; together with two letters, one from Pompey in Spain to the Senate replete with the petulance of the favourite of Fortune, the other from Mithridates of Pontus to King Arsaces, enabling us to envisage Rome's career of conquest from the point of view of the threatened nations—these and a number of inconsiderable fragments permit us to regret but do not enable us to appraise Sallust's maturest and probably most important production.

The monograph on the Catilinarian conspiracy (*de Catilinæ Coniuratione*) has been characterised as a political pamphlet, written to disprove Cæsar's complicity in the anarchic plot. That Sallust had this purpose in view is hardly doubtful, nor could he have attained it better than by the contrast which he presents between the desperado of depraved morals and disordered intellect, and the cool statesman who, in the graphically reported debate on the

treatment of the conspirators, advises his auditors not to lose their heads and not to violate the constitution. Could men so different have been colleagues? Throughout he represents the struggle as one between anarchy and authority. Of the proceedings of the recognised democratic party he says nothing. Again, the refusal of Cicero to entertain accusations of complicity against Cæsar is recorded with emphasis, but evidently more with the view of establishing Cæsar's innocence than of illustrating Cicero's generosity. The charge itself is explained as due to personal animosities which are carefully specified.

But the book is more than a political pamphlet; it is a study in social pathology. Sallust has an intellectual interest in the crisis as the outcome of deep-seated evils which he diagnoses with insight (cc. 6-13, 36. 4,-37). Nevertheless, though this intellectual interest is unmistakable, the impartiality which Sallust professes (*Cat.* iv. 3) is not, as with Thucydides, the impartiality of detachment. He is disgusted with both parties (*Cat.* 3 5, 38. 3). A mind thus embittered was not likely to be entirely purged of personal feeling, and Sallust can have had little love for the orator who in his speech for Milo had referred to him and his associates as "depraved and abandoned men." In telling the story of the conspiracy he could not ignore the part accorded to Cicero by universal knowledge, but he indicates it curtly and without enthusiasm. The first *Catilinarian* is alluded to as "a useful and brilliant speech." In dealing with the crisis the consul has "no lack of craft and cunning." From the final decision as to the fate of the conspirators Sallust abruptly turns to reflect on the causes of the decadence of Rome, which he finds (not quite correctly) in the dearth of distinguished individuals. Of such in his day he can see but two,

Cæsar and Cato, whom he proceeds to compare and contrast. The comparison is brilliant. But, after all, the subject of his book is the Catilinarian conspiracy, and to be silent at this point about the man who suppressed it is to impose a slight.\*

From this personal bias the lively account of the Jugurthine war (*De bello Jugurthino*), dealing as it does with events before Sallust's day, is free. The aristocratic arrogance of the Senatorial general Metellus does not blind Sallust to his merits, and the unworthy intrigues of Marius to displace him (64. 5) are contrasted with the correct demeanour of his own lieutenant Sulla (96. 4). The vulgar assertiveness and egotism of the self-made man, and his coarse-grained sarcasms at the expense of the nobility, are true to life, nor is the part played by Fortune in his success obscured. And there are other points in which the later is superior to the earlier work. Based on personal experience of Africa, supplemented by studies which included the "Punic books" of King Hiempsal, it is a work on which more pains have been expended. It shows some understanding of Numidian customs, and gives a true impression of the difficulties of desert warfare. If the geography is vague the suggestion of African scenery is vivid. Throughout, the inter-relation of home politics and the conduct of the war is skilfully kept in view.

In both works vagueness and occasional inaccuracy in chronology, not surprising in a writer less concerned with the sequence than the significance of events, are balanced by liveliness of narrative and art in its arrangement. At the close of the *Catiline* the conspirators are

\* Lamarre, *Hist Lit Lat* iii p 532, to whose account of Sallust I owe much



left lying dead upon the field, each where he had fought, with all his wounds in front, while in the hearts of the victors exultation mingles with grief and misgiving. Not without its purpose, again, is the seemingly hurried conclusion of the Jugurthine war. The barbaric King Jugurtha is surrendered to Sulla, who hands him over to Marius, but of his fate there is not a word. Once vanquished, he is of no importance. Instead, we hear the mention of yet another crisis caused by aristocratic incompetence, and a second call for the plebeian soldier to meet it. Art too is shown in those speeches on the model of Thucydides, in which the speakers are made to say what they might have been expected to say in the circumstances. They are not all equally admirable. Marius' address to the electors is too antithetic, and Catiline's to the conspirators too theatrical, to be convincing. But they have this merit, that they are distinctive. Throughout, Sallust's democratic orators are all different, and the same is true of the minor personages from the *rusé* and outwardly respectable Æmilius Scaurus to the vain and loquacious Curius. For of personality Sallust has a strong grasp. The same desire to penetrate to the reality beneath the appearance which is shown in his interpretation of political phenomena is revealed in his studies of individuals. In the unsparing scrutiny of motives he is the forerunner of Tacitus. The disorder of Catiline's intellectual and moral being, the anguish of Jugurtha when he feels himself betrayed, the prolonged wavering of Bocchus between two treacheries, are luminously portrayed. Nor are pointed summaries of character wanting. Here, for instance, is Sulla: "Eager for enjoyment, but still more eager for distinction, he cultivated a luxurious ease, but never allowed pleasure to interfere with business. Eloquent, astute, and winning,

he was in his power of dissimulating extraordinarily profound. Of many things was he lavish, especially money. Moreover, though till the moment of his victory over his fellow-citizens he was the most fortunate of men, his good fortune never surpassed his energy."

In the juxtaposition of contradictory characteristics Sallust's psychology is perhaps unduly influenced by his rhetoric. Here we reach a point of contact between the historian and the stylist. Sallust's style, peculiar and slightly affected though it be, is yet not unconnected with the historical development of Latin prose. With its small variety of connecting particles, which are indeed often omitted altogether, and its old-fashioned words such as "wights" for "men," and "in no long time" for "soon," his meagre sentences give an impression of archaism. This was deliberate. To lend dignity to his narrative, or perhaps to convey a suggestion of those austerer days which he affected to regret, Sallust borrowed obsolete words from Cato. And indeed his unconnected, unrhythmical but often epigrammatic periods remind one not a little of Cato. Only the absence of cadence, which was with Cato the result of indifference or want of art, is in Sallust a protest against the balanced periodic style of which Cicero was the exponent. The maintenance of balance gave a hint of what was coming and encouraged padding. Sallust preferred to surprise, and aimed at being terse. There were among the "Atticising" orators those who found an unsuitable model in Thucydides, and Sallust, who in some respects represents Atticism as applied to history, emulated the conciseness of Thucydides in style as his impartiality and philosophic reflectiveness in outlook. His brevity was greatly admired by ancient critics. Seneca\*

\* *Controv* ix. i. 13, quoted by Lamarre Op cit iii 546.

the rhetorician declares that "he has routed Thucydides in his own quarters." Such eulogies go beyond the truth ; but the impression of terseness has been heightened by his skill for rapid, pictorial narrative, facilitated by a free use of the historic infinitive, while pregnant reflections and concise definitions show the admirer of Thucydides. One may instance "Community of likes and dislikes, that is the only true basis for friendship": "Nowadays lavishness with other people's money is called generosity and criminal audacity courage." Sallust delights in antitheses, such as "coward and brave incurred equal danger, though with differing report." Here we have an anticipation of a later and more distinguished manner. In effect Sallust achieved a style which, immediately admired and imitated, fought a long battle with Ciceronian balance. Reinforced by the influence of rhetorical education it carried the day, and, despite an academic reaction, became the predominant style of the Empire, achieving its final consummation in Tacitus.

Inferior to Tacitus and, in the importance of his output, to Livy, Sallust may yet claim to be at once the first philosophic and the first artistic historian. Despite stylistic mannerisms and some vestiges of personal bias, penetrating interpretation and vivid presentment of facts make his characterisation by St. Augustine\* as "an historian who ennobled truth," not wholly undeserved.

A much humbler rôle, that of writer of popular biographies, was undertaken by CORNELIUS NEPUS (99-25 B.C.). Such at least is the aspect under which he is known to us, for his poems, a work called "Examples" (*Exempla*), perhaps like that of Valerius Maximus (p. 374) exhibiting morality in action, a chronological epitome of

\* *de civ. dei* 1.5 Lamarre, op. cit. III 551

universal history in three books (*Chronica*), a geographical treatise, and lives of the elder Cato and Cicero, are lost. All that we possess is a part of his "Men of Eminence" (*De viris illustribus*). It seems to have consisted of sixteen books, in which the eminent men were treated under eight classes, kings, generals, statesmen,\* orators, poets, historians, philosophers and scholars; to each class two books were assigned, one of which was devoted to foreigners, the other to Romans. Of this work we have the section on foreign generals. The lives of twenty of these, all, except the Carian Datames, Greeks, are followed by a chapter on kings, justifying the exclusion of certain generals because, being kings as well, they had already been treated under the latter head, and the inclusion of Agesilaus on the ground of the subordinate character of the Spartan kingship; and introducing the lives of two Carthaginians, Hamilcar and Hannibal, with which the section ended. Of the section dealing with historians two Lives survive, those of the elder Cato and Atticus.

The writing of biographies was a novelty, though whether the "Men of Eminence" preceded Varro's "Portraits" (p. 228) is uncertain, and Nepos more than once distinguishes between his aim and that of the historian. It is, he explains, not to record events, but to give a picture of the life and habits of his subjects (*imaginem consuetudinis et vitæ*).

Thus the vague and too uniformly laudatory statements of exploits do not afford data for estimating the military capacity of the generals. We have in effect a series of brief popular biographies, readable but too compendious to be really interesting. Perhaps the most effective among them is that which depicts the brilliant and paradoxical Alcibi-

\* Nipperdey, to whom this arrangement is due, puts *jurists* here

ades. The juxtaposition of Greek and Roman worthies which was a feature of the work may have suggested to Plutarch his more detailed and incomparably more valuable *Parallel Lives*. As contributions to history the value of Nepos' lives is marred by confusions and inaccuracies of fact and date. He seems to have been careless in the use of his numerous and excellent authorities, some of whom he omits to mention. The only life as to which he is an original authority himself, that of Atticus, is the longest and the most interesting. In the former respect it contrasts with the meagre account of Cato, in which the author refers his readers to a longer life which is one of the lost works of Nepos. But there is no sufficient reason for doubting that the life of Atticus belongs to the section on historians. If too eulogistic, as written by a friend and, except for the last four chapters, during the lifetime of its subject, it gives a good idea of Cicero's confidential correspondent, bearing witness to his personal charm, shrewdness, literary interests and influence, and willingness to take trouble for his friends.

Catullus, who dedicated an edition of his poems to Nepos, refers to his chronological epitome as "learned, ye gods! and laborious,"\* and Cicero speaks of him as "immortal."† The former is using the language of compliment, the latter that of gentle ridicule. A later critic describes Nepos more accurately as "a tolerably careful recorder of events"‡

Nepos' manner of writing, plain but not inelegant, probably exhibits the influence of the Attic school (pp. 176, 192). He rarely attempts long periods, and when he does so is apt to become involved. A sometimes ex-

C 16

† ἀμύσπορος Cic *ad Att.* XVI v 5‡ Gellius, *Noct. Att.* xv. 28 1 *rerum memoriarum non indiligens.*

aggerated curtness is due to the desire to be compendious, while his wish to be popular is reflected in occasional colloquialisms.

In view of their absorption in politics the public men of the day maintained a creditable interest in the things of the mind. And if Cæsar in the midst of his preoccupation could find time to write a treatise on analogy, others less engrossed in the political crisis carried on that pursuit of (mainly linguistic) learning which has been noted as characteristic of the Sullan era. MARCUS TERENTIUS VARRO (116-27 B.C.), the epitome of this learning, was a student by predilection, and a public man only in consequence of his position and circumstances. A conscientious Republican, he was pitted against Cæsar as Pompey's legate in Spain. But when resistance seemed hopeless he yielded with a good grace, and was entrusted with the congenial task of superintending the formation of the great public library contemplated by the Dictator. After the death of Cæsar he fell again on troublous times, and was proscribed by Antony on account of his wealth. Rescued through the influence of a friend, he continued to study and to write till he died at the age of ninety. For he not only amassed knowledge, but was at pains to communicate it to others. Cicero, who regarded him with something of the awe of sciolist for savant, refers to him as "most polygraphous," and with good reason. At the age of eighty-four he had, he tells us, written "seventy hebdomads" of books, and Ritschl estimates his ultimate output at seventy-four works comprised in six hundred and twenty books. Of this vast number only one, a treatise on agriculture (*Rerum rusticarum libri tres*), survives in its entirety, together about a quarter of another, his work on the Latin language (*De Lingua Latina*). Of

the rest little more remains than the titles, which latter we owe in the main to a list compiled by Jerome. But their range is so remarkable and their influence was so great that it is worth while to make a survey of the lost as well as some estimate of the surviving treatises. Varro was poet, historian, antiquarian, philologist, physicist, and agriculturist. Though we hear vaguely of poems and more precisely of satires, pseudo-tragedies (probably burlesques), and even a work bearing the same title as Lucretius' didactic (*De rerum natura*), what is known of the bent of Varro's genius makes it difficult to believe that he was a poet in any extended sense. Of his satires called "Menippean," however, we know enough to make us deeply regret their loss. Their title they owe to the relation in which they stood to the satires of the cynic Menippus of Gadara (fl about 250 B.C.) Not that they were in essence exotic. Quintilian calls them satires of the pre-Lucilian kind; that is to say, sketches of a dramatic character in a variety of metres. The elements in them definitely due to Menippus were probably the mixture of prose and verse, which seems to have been a feature of Menippus' writings, but cannot be proved to have been employed in the earlier Latin satire, and their cynical and derisive tone. This tone, however, was used in not quite the same way as by the Gadarene, for the cynic made a mock of philosophy, Varro only of the absurdities of philosophers, and, disciple of the eclectic Antiochus as he was, he sought to commend by popular treatment the valuable lessons obscured by the battles of the sects. This and the praise of the good old times as contrasted with the luxury of the present are the two most characteristic features of the Menippean satires. Of the titles, some, such

as "The Dog-historian" (κυνίστωρ) or "The Dog-orator" (κυνορρήτωρ) have reference to the inspiration of the satires; some, like "Mark City" (Μαρκόπολις), "The Two Marks" (Βιμαρκίος), or "Varro's Boy" (Μαρσίφορ), to the part played in them by the author. Titles such as "An Ajax of Straw" (Αἶαξ Στραμεντικός) do not necessarily imply burlesque of tragedy, for "The Furies" (Εὐμηνίδες), as the fragments show, deals with the various manias which affect mankind, and "An Ulysses and a Half" (Σεκυλίγες) tells of the author's wanderings in the field of thought, wanderings more protracted than those of the much-travelled hero. The "Three-headed Monster" (Τρικέφαλος) had a political bearing, and was directed against the combination of Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus. Some of the titles are proverbial; for instance, "No fool like an old fool" (ὅς τις παῖδες οἱ γέροντες), or "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" (*idem Atli quod Titi*). Some, again, are rather enigmatic, and in these and some clearer cases more explicit alternative titles have been added by later hands. Thus the subject of "the battle of the goats" (*caprinum prælium*) is explained as "pleasure" (περὶ ἡδονῆς), that of "steady with the pot" (*est modus matula*) as "drunkenness" (περὶ μεθῆς), of "I've got you" (ἔχω σε) as "Fortune" (περὶ τύχης), and of "oh my! oh my!" (Παρίπαπα), which might be the title of a latter-day *revue*, as "encomiums" (περὶ ἐγκωμίων), whether taking the form of eulogies of deceased scoundrels or compliments to pretty women. Nearly all promise good fun; but for the reconstruction of the Satires the fragments hardly suffice. Attempts of this kind\* have been most successful,

\* Mommsen, R. H. (Engl. trans.) iv 596, Merry, *Fragments of Roman Poetry*, p. 196, ff.



perhaps, in the case of those of "the early bird" (*Manius*), which suggest a picture of the life of a countryman of the good old sort, or "the sexagenarian," a Roman Rip Van Winkle who wakes after a sleep of half a century to find himself in a world he does not recognise. But on the whole the humour of the *Menippeans* is irrecoverable. Some of the metrical fragments, however, exhibit a poetic grace in surprising contrast with the rude style of Varro's prose works. Take this, which seems to describe aerial adventures similar to those of Menippus alluded to by Lucian :

*Suddenly, hard upon the noon of night,  
When all the air with glowing fires adorned  
Revealed the dance celestial of the stars,  
Light drifting clouds with thin and watery veil  
Heaven's golden caverns from our eyes withdrew.  
Then from the icy pole outbrake the winds  
Delirious offspring<sup>†</sup> of the sevenfold wain,  
And with them pantiles, branches, besoms whirled.  
We, shipwrecked souls atumble, like to storks  
Whose wings the two-edged lightning's heat hath singed,  
From height of heaven to earth lamenting fell.*

Genial too as well as graceful is the praise of wine :

*Better tippie than wine no one knows,  
This men to cure care did invent;  
Kindly soul in which cheerfulness grows,  
And good fellowship's very cement.†*

Perhaps in deference to Cicero's suggestion,† Varro

\* I owe this phrase and perhaps more, to Prof J Wight Duff's version in his *Literary History of Rome*.

† *Vino nihil iucundius quisquam bibit,  
Hoc ægritudinem ad levandam invenerunt,  
Hoc hilaritatis dulce seminarium,  
Hoc contmet coagulum convivia.*

‡ *Ac* II 1 3, Lamarre, vol. iii. 569.

wrote two definitely philosophical works, one entitled *De Philosophia* and the other *De forma Philosophiae*. But though learned he had not a philosophic mind, and he was more capable of enumerating (as he did in the *De Philosophia*) the 288 different views of the highest good made known to him by his studies than of moving in the regions of abstract thought. His conclusion that man is body and soul, two steeds yoked side by side, that his highest good is both material and spiritual, and that the best life is that in which action and contemplation are combined, is that of his master Antiochus.

Doubtless he was more in his element in the borderland of philosophy and history to which his philosophico-historical treatises (*Logistorici*) belonged. These were dialogues on topics of general interest in which the leading part was taken by historical \* personages who might be supposed specially qualified to deal with them. The twofold titles, such as Marius on Fortune or Sisenna on History, which are quite parallel to Cicero's *Cato de senectute* and *Laelius de amicitia*, suggest the popular character of the treatment, theory being illustrated by historical instances or individual experience. In one department of history, biography, Varro made a new departure. His "portraits" (*Imaginum libri xv.*), seven hundred lives of eminent Greeks and Romans each with a portrait and a metrical inscription, have a special interest as the first illustrated book of which we know.

Though other works by Varro might be classed as historical, he was really rather an antiquarian than a historian. In this department his great achievement was "The Antiquities of Things Human and Divine" (*Anti-*

\* *Orestes de insania* is an exception.

*quitatum rerum Humanarum et Divinarum libri xli.*), of which we know not the substance but only the imposing and symmetrical scheme. Of its forty-one books twenty-five were devoted to things human, sixteen to things divine. The twenty-five books comprised one introductory book and four divisions, each of six books, dealing respectively with persons, places, times, and things. Thus the first division was concerned with the Trojans and the early history of Rome, the second contained a geographical and physical description of Italy, the third dealt with chronology, and the last with such matters as laws, treaties, and procedure in peace and war. Of the sixteen books the first was introductory (as in the other part), and the subject-matter was treated under the same headings as before, namely, persons as pontiffs and augurs; places, for instance altars; times, for instance feast days. But to the four headings of the first part a fifth was added, that of gods, and to each division were assigned not six books but three.

The instances given will have sufficed to indicate that it was the machinery not the essence of religion with which Varro concerned himself, but the value of the whole work must have been inestimable. And it was only the crown and sum of a series of monographs \* in which Varro set himself to acquaint the Romans with their past. Well did he deserve the fine tribute paid him by Cicero in the *Academics*: † “We were wandering as strangers in our own city; but your books have, in a manner of speaking, brought us home”

The other main aspect in which Varro appears is that of a collector of scientific facts, primarily in the department of language.

\* Enumerated in Teuffel

† *Ac post*, I iii. 9.

A series of works on grammar\* culminated in his monumental work on the Latin tongue (*De Lingua Latina*). Of this six books more or less defective survive out of an original twenty-five, and they include a plan of the work, like that of the "Antiquities" highly formal. There were three main parts—etymology, inflexions, and syntax. The first two parts each contain six, the third twelve books. Each of the six books is divided into two triads. The first triad of the etymological part (1-3) sets forth what has been said for or against, and what is to be said about etymology; the second triad (4-6) applies etymology to words of time, place, and poetic expressions. Similarly the first triad of the inflexional part (7-9) sets forth what had been said for or against and what was to be said about analogy, the constant element in word formation; the second applies the principles arrived at to words of time and place, and to poetical expressions. As to the twelve books on syntax we possess no such precise information. We retain the special part of the first section, and the general part of the second.

Varro, though he cannot achieve comparative philology, does extend his purview to words belonging to other languages besides Greek. He has the conception of simplifying linguistic study by the mastery of what he calls primitive words, though these are only simple words not roots. If he goes astray owing to ignorance of the principles of phonetic change, and produces some absurd derivations because guided by superficial resem-

<sup>1</sup> (a) *De antiquitate Litterarum* (b) *De origine Linguae Latinae*. (c) περὶ χαρακτήρων, about the formation of words (d) *De similitudine verborum*, about analogy (e) *De sermone Latino*, containing information about orthography, accent, style, and metre

blance,\* yet his knowledge of old forms† sometimes leads him to correct identifications. Varro is an analogist, but has a just conception of the limitations of analogy. He is aware that language is in a state of constant change.

With the ancients grammar included criticism, and Varro produced a work on style (*De proprietate scriptorum*), three books, together with others on the poetic art (*De poematibus*) on recitations (*De lectionibus*), on the composition of satires (*De compositione satirarum*), and on the Roman poets (*De poetis*). Among the latter he gave special attention to Plautus (*Quæstionum Plautinarum liber 1*), the canon of whose plays he definitely settled (*De comædis Plautinis*).

The history of dramatic literature, indeed, seems to have had a great attraction for Varro, for he wrote books on the origins of the drama (*De originibus scenæ*), on dramatic performances (*De actionibus scenæ*), on the arrangements of the acts (*De actibus scenæ*)—if these be separate works—on records of the stage (*De actis scenæ*), and on masks (*De personis*).

Among contributions to physical science, in addition to the geography of Italy which had formed part of the "Antiquities," may be mentioned a work on the sea coast (*De ora maritima*), perhaps identical with another entitled "A Nautical Treatise" (*Libri navales*), and a mariner's calendar (*Ephemeris navalis*), written for Pompey when about to start on his Spanish expedition.

Finally, Varro compiled an encyclopædia of the sciences, possibly suggested by the comparatively rudimentary *præcepta* of Cato (p. 97) The branches treated

\* *E g* terra is connected with *terere*.

† *E g* *medidies*, which helps him to the etymology of *meridies*.

—grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astrology, medicine, and music—included the “seven liberal arts,” and their correspondence with the *trivium* and *quadrivium* bears witness to the influence exercised by Varro on the conception of education entertained in the Middle Ages.

The last of the sciences which Varro sought to popularise was that of Agriculture. His three books on country matters (*Rerum rusticarum libri*), written when he was eighty, when, as he said in his homely way, it was time he was “packing up his traps for the move from life,” have an attraction which is absent from the treatise on the Latin tongue. In them the author of the *Menippean Satires* reappears. The dialogue form is adopted, and each book has a fitting *mise-en-scène*. The interlocutors in the first book, which is about agriculture, are assembled, by appointment with the sacristan, in the temple of the goddess of the soil (*Tellus*). They bear names such as Fundilius (farmer), Agrarius (tiller of fields), which contain a reference to the subject of their discourse. One of them at least, Tremellius Scrofa (sow), is a real personage, an authority on agriculture and author of a work upon it. The guests are discovered examining a map of Italy. In the absence of the host, the dialogue, which deals with the soil itself and the instruments, operations, and seasons for its culture, is prolonged until it is terminated by the news of his murder, an incident startling to us, but, as the company observes, only too characteristic of the times. The dialogue on stock (*De re pecuaria*), the subject of the second book, is carried on in Epirus, a great cattle country, and a leading part in it is taken by the already mentioned Scrofa. In the third book Varro and his friend Axius,

while awaiting the issue of an election in which they are interested, seek the shelter of a public portico. Here they find the Augur Appius Claudius surrounded by a number of friends bearing the names of birds (Merula, Pavo, Pica, and Passer, or blackbird, peacock, magpie, and sparrow). Naturally the conversation turns upon birds, thus introducing the subject of the book, "profits of the country house" (*De villaticis fructibus*), which are realised chiefly by keeping birds of all kinds, but also four-footed game, such as boars, hares, and roe-deer, and finally bees. The discourse is interrupted from time to time by the arrival of news of the progress of the election, and ended by the announcement of its successful issue.

The very systematic exposition of the subject is not, as in Cicero's dialogues, artistically blended with the dramatic setting. Varro is, in fact, no artist. The style of "Country Matters," if superior to that of the linguistic treatise, in which, as Mommsen amusingly observes, "the sentences are strung on the thread of the relative like thrushes on a string," and if commended by homely observations and proverbial reflections\* is wanting in distinction. Matter not manner was the forte of the writer, who is "as instructive to the lover of facts as Cicero is delightful to the lover of words."† Permanent as was the value of the information he collected, it has a special importance in relation to the period which immediately succeeded. For with his attachment to the ancient ways, Varro anticipated the retrospective attitude of the Augustan era, and material amassed by his erudition received embellishment from Augustan art.

\* Cruttwell cites *homo bulla, Di facientes adiuvant, Romani sedendo vincunt*.

† Augustine, *de Civ. Dei* vi 2.

## IX

### THE AUGUSTAN AGE. VIRGIL

DURING the period of its highest perfection (82 B.C.-14 A.D.) the development of Latin Literature was profoundly affected by a succession of great political events, the downfall of the Republic, the agony of civil war, and the attainment of peace under a single ruler. These facts go far to explain many of the outstanding differences between the literature of the Augustan age and that which preceded it. Instead of turmoil and a sense of impending crisis there was calm. This calm is reflected in a serenity which is in marked contrast to the restless energy discernible in the productions of the time of Cicero. But this was not all. With calm came reflection, and with reflection the realisation of the greatness of Rome's achievement, which had seemed on the point of being lost in general confusion and bloodshed. With this retrospective realisation grew the fond interest in the small beginnings from which such marvellous results had sprung, the "passionate antiquarianism" which was an important element in the greater and the leading motive in some of the lesser productions of the age. Nor were men's eyes turned only to the past. In the reign of Augustus Rome may be said to have reached her zenith. Greater in extent than it had ever been before, her empire was better organised



and infinitely more secure. The happiness she now enjoyed was enhanced by contrast with the miseries she had just escaped. And now that she was set upon a different path there were golden hopes of a yet more glorious future. The greatness of Rome thus felt became an inspiration, and circumstances conspired to enable it to find adequate expression in literature.

In the absence of the competition of political interest there was an increased concentration of energy on literature.\* In later Republican times, letters, no longer despised, had yet been but the fugitive occupation of men of position. None but slaves or freedmen made them the business of a lifetime. Now they became the chief preoccupation of the leaders of society. These not only wrote themselves; they encouraged others to write. The Augustan age was an age of literary patronage. Augustus himself led the way, using literature as an instrument of government, and he was ably seconded by Macenas, an amateur of letters from predilection as well as from policy. Others, notably Pollio and Messalla, gathered round them groups of writers, finding in literary pursuits and the encouragement of letters a substitute for the political activity from which they were now excluded. Thus men of special aptitudes were encouraged and enabled to devote themselves to literature without distraction. Literature became more of a profession than it had hitherto been, and as a consequence a higher level of literary finish was attained. Indeed, it is possible to discern something like a concerted effort to rewrite Latin Literature in accordance with revised standards of art.

\* *Mutavit mentem populus levis et calet uno  
Scribendi studio.*—Hor. *Ep.* II. i. 108.

But there was a reverse to the picture. It was not merely that Augustus was spoken of in terms which could never before in the history of Latin Literature have been applied to an individual. Under whatever conventions of language, the greater and more sincere of the Augustan writers were but giving a genuine expression to personal and national gratitude. But the loss of freedom inevitably reacted on literature. It killed eloquence, and circumscribed the sphere of history. Political oratory was silenced in Cicero; and Pollio, warned by Horace that he was "walking over hidden fires," did not carry his history of "the First Triumvirate and after" later than the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.). The restriction did not apply, of course, to epitomes of universal history, nor to technical treatises; but the great historical work of the reign of Augustus was retrospective in intention and patriotic rather than political in tone. Only in the higher realms of the imagination were thought and expression still imagined to be free. The sequel showed that this belief was mistaken. But in the meantime the preponderance of poetry\* over prose in the Augustan Age is as marked as the converse had been in the latest period of the Republic.

These characteristic features of the Augustan Age became more clearly defined as the causes which tended to produce them had time to come into operation. Strictly speaking, the term "Augustan Age" is not applicable before the battle of Actium (31 B.C.), which established Augustus' rule. But the Augustan Age may conveniently be regarded as beginning when the Ciceronian or late Republican period came to an end in 43 B.C. For one thing there is a marked change in the personnel of

\* *Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim.* Hor. *l. c.* 1. 117.

literature just about this point. M. Furius Bibaculus (b. 83 B.C.), a contemporary of Catullus, lived till 24 B.C. Asinius Pollio, known to Catullus as "an eloquent and witty boy," appears in Horace as tragedian, historian, and patron of letters. But for the most part we are met by new names, and the writers themselves belong to the new rather than the old order of things. L. Varius (74-14 B.C.), the eldest of them, is typical in this respect. For while in the latter days of the Republic the men of letters had been in the main supporters of the Senate, and though Furius Bibaculus just mentioned wrote invectives against Octavian,\* Varius was an admirer of Cæsar and wrote an epic on his death, as later he composed a panegyric in hexameters on Augustus. Where we do find continuity is in the persistence of a school. A group of young poets carried on the traditions of the school (*cf.* pp. 139-40) which had found its most distinguished representative in Catullus. Now, as in his day, it was centred in Cisalpine Gaul, and in style and choice of subject recalled the writers of Alexandria. There is, for instance, Æmilius Macer of Verona, author of didactics† of the Alexandrine stamp.‡ There is C. Cornelius Gallus, whom Cicero had he been living would have called "a singer of Euphoriion," as he called the Alexandrines of his day, for Gallus translated Euphoriion and wrote epyllia § in his manner. Further, he

\* Tac. *A.* iv. 34.

† *Ornithogonia*, on the generation of birds; *Theriaca*, on remedies against snake bite, and perhaps another, *De herbis*, on botany.

‡ Quintilian applies to him the epithets *elegans* and *humilis*.

§ Prof Skutsch in *Aus Virgil's Frühzeit* has made it seem likely that Virgil's sixth eclogue contains in effect a catalogue of Gallus' epyllia, while the tenth eclogue gives the motives of several of his elegiac poems.

produced four books of erotic elegies, grouped, like those of the *Lydia* by Cato or the *Perilla* by Tigidas, round a central figure, his mistress Lycoris. The influence of Catullus is strongly marked in some minor poems\* of uncertain attribution, but most probably the work of writers belonging to this group and period. One of these, again, mentions Cinna, most typical of Republican Alexandrines, as a poet with whom he himself could not yet venture to claim comparison.† Only over him who wrote thus as the age unfolded there passed the breath of a larger inspiration, and while he did not forget the lessons of sentiment and elegance which he had learned from the Alexandrine writers, he supplemented these by the study of nobler models, and became the voice of Italy and of Rome

P. VERGILIUS MARO was born at Andes, near Mantua, in 70 B.C. The son of a peasant, he was, as Macrobius says, "a rustic reared amid the woods and copses," and it may be surmised that the most potent of the influences which went to form his genius was that of the country sights and sounds among which his early life was passed. But the peasant, who had married his employer's daughter and acquired a competence by rural industries, was able to give his son a good education. Virgil went for his schooling to Verona, to Milan, and finally to Rome. Here he studied under well-known teachers—Greek he learned from the grammarian-poet Parthenius, rhetoric from Epidius—also, it is said, the teacher of Octavius and of Antony—philosophy from the Epicurean Siro. An early

\* *Catalepton* 2 5 10 (probably by Virgil), *Ibid.* 6, 12, and the *Ciris* (probably by Gallus). Skutsch, *op. cit.*

† Virg. *E.* ix. 35

poem\* reasonably attributed to him expresses his impatience with the bombast of the rhetoricians, and anticipates with delight the study of a philosophy which promised to free the mind from every care. This utterance is characteristic of Virgil; for though he was never a philosopher, even in the sense of being the constant adherent of any one system, yet for his serious mind philosophy had a strong attraction, and quite at the close of his life he refers to its pursuit as "those better studies" to which he is eager to devote himself when the *Æneid* should be off his hands.

Whether these anticipations were realised or not, there is no doubt that the didactic poem on "Nature" by the Epicurean Lucretius, published soon after its author's death, which occurred, according to tradition, on the same day (October 15, B.C. 55) on which Virgil assumed the garb of manhood, exercised a profound influence on him. Everything that we know of Virgil—his slowness of speech, his shyness, his weak health—would tend to show that he was unfitted for practical life; and after a solitary and unsuccessful attempt to speak at the bar, he seems to have returned to Northern Italy, and there, like Milton at Horton, to have lived a life of studious retirement.

Whether at Rome or in Northern Italy, he was in close relationship with members of the Transpadane school of poetry to which reference has already been made. Macer, said to have been the original of Mopsus in the ninth eclogue, is described as his friend; Codrus (a poet

\* *Appendix Vergiliana, Catalepton V. 1.* 8-10

*Ite hinc manes, ste rhetorum ampullæ . . .*

*Nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus,*

*Magni petentes docta dicta Sironis.*

*Vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.*

placed on a level with Cinna in an epigram of the Augustan \* Age) he names as such himself.† To Varius, with whom at some time of his life he seems to have lived,‡ he refers as his superior in poetic art,§ and to Cornelius Gallus he was bound by ties of affectionate admiration. That he wrote during these years is probable; but of what he wrote little or nothing remains. His unpublished works, with the exception of the *Æneid*, were by his wish suppressed at his death; and the inclusion in Virgilian manuscripts of sundry minor poems || is probably due in the main to an effort made in the reign of Claudius, and supplemented in the fourth century A.D., to fill the gap thus left.¶ Some of them are ruled out by internal evidence. It is, for instance, difficult to believe that in "The Gnat" (*Culex*), a laboured epyllion on a subject suited for an epigram, which exhibits nothing characteristically Virgilian, we can have even an early and inchoate work of the Virgil whom we know. At the same time, some of these poems, though not by Virgil, may have been produced in the period we are considering (54-42 B.C.), have emanated from his circle, and show traces of his influence. Thus, Prof. Skutsch has made it probable that "the Sea-Mew" (*Ciris*) was by Virgil's friend, C. Cornelius Gallus. The Catullan character of this little

\* Valgius Baehrens, *Fragmenta Poet. Rom.* p 342.

† *E* vii 22.

‡ *Vergilius contubernalis*. Porph. on Hor. c. i vi 1.

§ *E* ix. 35.

|| See note at the end of this chapter.

¶ The earliest reference to any poem in the *Appendix Vergiliana* is that made by Lucan (Life by Suetonius) about 55 A.D. On the other hand not one of the poems is referred to by Ovid in his lengthy catalogue of erotic poems (*Tristia*, xi. 421-466), date 9 A.D. The collection was probably made or begun between these two dates.

epic, shown in the nature of the poem, the movement of the verse, and the method of narration, is in favour of its being assigned to a date not much later than that of Catullus' death (54 B.C.), and the occurrence in it of innumerable phrases and some lines common to it and to the undoubted work of Virgil is, on the whole, not best explained on the supposition that it was written by some one who had Virgil's work before him, and thus wrote later than his death (say about 18 B.C.), but still adhered to an outworn Catullan manner; nor, again, is it covered by the crude formula that Virgil copied Gallus; rather were the common passages the outcome of a close intellectual communion between Virgil and the most intimate of his poetic friends in that time of growth and formation during which all that is implied by the word Virgilianism was coming to the birth.\*

So with the work of another member of the circle. A fragment by Varius, which describes a hound questing late and alone upon the track of an old stag, ends with the line which tells how

*No thought of home has he  
Though lost, nor yields before the deepening night.*

This line occurs again, in a more suitable context and with an improved division of the words, in a passage in the *Eclogues* (viii. 88). Yet in the earlier place and form it has an unmistakably Virgilian ring. Perhaps, under the influence of Varius Virgil made his earliest attempt to write epic—a poem on the Alban kings. But he desisted, mistaking the subject. Not yet did he deem that he uttered aught worthy of Varius (*E* ix. 35) any more than of Cinna. The countryman felt that pastoral rather than heroic poetry was his rôle (*E* vi. 3-5), and his first

\* Mackail, *Class. Review*, April 1898, Duff, *Lit. Hist. Rome*, p. 487.

published work was a collection of poems, probably selected from a larger number, based on the pastorals of an Alexandrine idyllist who had not hitherto been exploited by any Latin writer.

In the *Eclogues* Virgil imitated Theocritus' idylls. He implies as much when he invokes the Sicilian muses (iv 1.) or makes the claim

*In Syracusan verse to sing of love  
My muse was first, nor blushed to haunt the grove*

vi 1

In fact it has been remarked that no important production in Latin Literature except Terence's comedy is so imitative. Not that Virgil translated or even paraphrased any one poem. But he is saturated with Theocritus, and his *Eclogues* are full of expressions borrowed from this idyll or that, while he reproduces longer passages from his originals in new combinations.

In the *Eclogues* then, as in the idylls, the subject is pastoral life and love, whether dealt with in monologue (E. 2), or whether two shepherds compete in alternate couplets (E. 3), or quatrains (E. 7), or, less definitely competitive, each contributes a longer song (E. 5), which may be (E. 8) punctuated in the Alexandrine manner by refrains.

But while Theocritus, working on the primitive bucolic, had produced to please the town-dwellers of Alexandria pictures, more or less realistic, of Sicilian life, the *Eclogues* of Virgil are removed one degree further from reality. His peasants, refined in tone and indeterminate in position, are unconvincing. His background has the vagueness which necessarily results from the blending of the scenery of Sicily with that of the Lombard plains. This judgment applies more particularly to the



purely pastoral idylls already enumerated, which with the exception of the eighth, are also the earliest, and belong to the year 42 B.C. The excepted eclogue is indeed the latest but one of the collection, and perhaps stood last in the first edition of the poems (*cf.* viii. 11); and if it is Theocritean in manner it contains some purely Virgilian touches which are the happiest in the poem (ll. 37-41).

But there occurred a crisis in Virgil's life. In consequence of the confiscations made by Octavian (41 B.C.) to provide for his veterans the poet was dispossessed of his home, and only restored to it, if indeed he was ultimately restored, by the influence of powerful friends. Without abandoning the style in which he had achieved success, he began to use his poetry to deplore his troubles and express his gratitude to his benefactors.

Already, following a hint given by Theocritus, who in his seventh idyll had introduced himself and a brother poet under fictitious names, Virgil had briefly referred to his patron Pollio and his rivals Bavius, Maevius, and Codrus.\* But from this point onwards † he carried the practice of contemporary allusion much further. Menalcas ejected (*E.* 9) and Tityrus restored (*E.* 1), represent the poet himself. The sixth eclogue, addressed to Varus, Pollio's successor as governor of Cisalpine Gaul, whom Virgil had promised to eulogise (ix. 26) if the territory of Mantua were exempted from distribution, contains a tribute to Virgil's friend Cornelius Gallus. Silenus found asleep and bound by two shepherds sings at their bidding a song which, beginning with an account

\* III. 88 and 91, V 11; VII. 22 and 25

† In *EE* I. IX. VI. (date 41 B.C.), IV. (date 40 B.C.); X. (date 37 B.C.)

of the birth of the world in words strongly reminiscent of Lucretius, passes on to a number of mythological subjects and then describes how Gallus was brought by a Muse to the Aonian mountains and how the Muses rose to do him honour and the old poet Linus hailed him as the successor of Hesiod. If the sixth eclogue glorifies Gallus as a poet the tenth and last (37 B.C.) idealises him as a lover. He is depicted as languishing for love of Lycoris ; and round him, as round Daphnis in Theocritus' first idyll, gathers the whole world of pastoral life, gods included, to sympathise and console. Gallus expresses somewhat wavering aspirations after the lives of shepherd poet and hunter, but ends by protesting the overpowering tyranny of love. Earlier in date (40 B.C.) is the famous fourth eclogue, addressed to Pollio. It anticipates the return of the Golden Age, which is to commence with the birth and develop with the growth of a boy born or to be born during his consulship.

By thus introducing into pastoral poetry allusions to contemporary events and by depicting real persons in pastoral surroundings Virgil originated the pastoral convention. It might be thought that this was adding yet another element of unreality to a style of poetry already artificial. The pastoral convention, if it has given us some good poems—a *Lycidas*, an *Adonais*, a *Thyrsis*—is not the happiest of literary expedients. Virgil finds some difficulty in accommodating to a pastoral setting the facts with which he has to deal, and in producing a coherent and intelligible argument. Tityrus in the first poem seems now a slave desirous of his freedom, now a proprietor seeking the restitution of his farm. Gallus, pining for Lycoris on Arcadian mountains, is a strange

travesty of the rising young soldier with whom his love for Cytheris was but an episode in a brilliant career. Above all, the mysterious child of the fourth eclogue cannot certainly be identified on any theory. The more obvious view that the poem refers to the expected issue of the union of Octavian with Scribonia which sealed the treaty of Brundisium and encouraged the general hopes of peace would seem to be excluded by the fact that the child actually born was not a boy but a girl, the afterwards infamous Julia. It can only be maintained on the supposition that Virgil was rash enough to prophesy, and then when his anticipations had been falsified by events allowed his prophecy to stand in all its vagueness as an expression of the aspirations of his age. The alternative view that Virgil playfully associates these aspirations with the person of a child born during his censorship to his patron Pollio, not inadmissible in itself, is rendered difficult of acceptance by the language he employs. Could he even playfully have apostrophised the consul's son as "dear scion of gods" or "germ of a Jove to be"?

Yet despite these self-imposed difficulties Virgil gains more than he loses by introducing personal experience and contemporary allusion into his pastoral poetry. The gain is seen in increased vividness of description and heightened warmth of feeling. In the farewell of the evicted peasant to the "sweet fields"\* of his home, there is the pathos of personal sorrow, in the indication of the limits of the surrendered farm, "all from where the first gentle slope of the hills begins down to the water and the old stag-headed beeches,"† the

\* E. 1. 3, *nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva.*

† E. 1x. 7.

precision of fond reminiscence, and in his tribute to his poet friend :

*Gallus, for whom my love grows hour by hour,  
Fast as green alders shoot in springtime's flower.*

*E. x 73.*

the glow of genuine affection. But it is in the fourth eclogue, which is more allegorical than pastoral, that Virgil gives the first hint of his true greatness. Here he is able to exhibit his peculiar gift, that of voicing by sympathetic intuition the desire of a nation and projecting himself into a future coloured by the mellow associations of the past. As he sings of how "the world's great age begins anew" his verse assumes a more sonorous music, and in language instinct with the mystery of dreams he anticipates the days when

*the very mariner  
Shall quit the main, nor vessel any more  
Bear freight of merchandise from shore to shore.*

*E. iv 38*

The *Eclogues* were followed by the *Georgics* (37-30 B.C.), a didactic poem in four books, dealing respectively with tillage, trees, cattle, and bees. The germ of this work is to be found in those pages in the *Eclogues* (e.g. i. 11) in which Virgil deplores the disorganisation of the countryside. It was the outcome of the wider sympathies stirred in him by contact with practical life. That the poem was suggested by Mæcenas is likely; that it was well calculated to advance the designs of social regeneration entertained by Octavian is certain; but Virgil did not need to be told that the best hope of national prosperity was to be found in the encouragement of the sound and wholesome country life with which his upbringing had made him familiar. Withal he had the literary ambition

to become the Roman Hesiod, and he describes himself as singing "a song of Ascra" (Hesiod's birthplace) through the country towns of Rome (ii. 176). Yet this is in the main but a conventional tribute to the father of didactic poetry. In their systematic treatment of the subject the *Georgics* have far more resemblance to the Alexandrine didactics than to the confused medley of precepts gathered under the title of the "Work and Days." Greater still was Virgil's debt to his Roman predecessor in didactic poetry. That he should be influenced by Lucretius was inevitable. Lucretius, in his poem on Nature, had, in a sense, dealt with the whole of which Virgil's subject was but a part. His work had appeared when Virgil was at the most impressionable age, and was engaged in studying philosophy under an Epicurean teacher. He had already given evidence of his admiration for Lucretius in the sixth eclogue, and in a famous passage in the second Georgic he extols the part of the natural philosopher, which he implies that, had his gifts allowed it, he would have preferred to that of a poet of the country, in words which can refer to none other than Lucretius :

*Happy the man who had the power to know  
The cause of Nature's workings, and hath set  
All terrors, and inexorable fate,  
And roar of greedy Acheron beneath his feet.*  
ii. 490 ff.

The debt which earned this tribute extended both to technique and to thought. In the machinery of his poem, in his invocations, his episodes, his phrases of transition, Virgil owes much to his predecessor. From him he derived an idea which lies at the root of the *Georgics*, the resistance of Nature, and the need of human labour to overcome it. But while Lucretius regards man

as ultimately doomed to failure in the struggle, Virgil conceives that he has it in him to "lord it" over the fields, and achieve success. Again, while with Lucretius the tendency of Nature to degenerate is an ultimate fact, with Virgil it is an ordinance of the supreme ruler designed to call forth the full powers of man. The great sire himself

*No easy road to husbandry assigned,  
And first was he by human skill to rouse  
The slumbering glebe, whetting the minds of men  
With care on care, nor suffering realm of his  
In drowsy sloth to stagnate.\**

For his facts Virgil went to standard authorities, such as Aristotle and Theophrastus, to the Alexandrine didactic poets,<sup>†</sup> but above all to the Roman writers on agriculture, Cato and Varro. It is, indeed, not impossible that the appearance of Varro's *De re Rustica* in 37 B.C. suggested to Virgil the choice of his subject. Drawing upon such sources as these, Virgil is quoted by Pliny and Columella as a trustworthy authority on agriculture. But he has achieved much more than this. In the words of Professor Sellar, he is the author of the only didactic poem which the world cares to read. The reason for the success of the *Georgics* is to be found partly in the execution of the poem, partly in the spirit by which it is informed.

In his treatment of the subject Virgil does not attempt to be exhaustive,<sup>‡</sup> and in order to avoid wearying his

\* G. 1. 121 (Rhoades' translation).

† Aratus' *Diosemeia* supplies the weather signs in G. i. 355 *sqq.*, an astronomical poem by Eratosthenes the passage about the five zones in 1. 233, and the *Theriaca* (on remedies for snake bite) the passage about snakes in 11. 415, while a work by the same writer (*μελισσοποιγικά*) was probably largely used in the fourth Georgic.

‡ 11. 42, *non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto.*

readers, he allows himself considerable freedom of omission. Thus in the first book he deals with but three of the lucky or unlucky days (i. 276), and in the fourth excludes the subject of horticulture, merely indicating its delights by his Wordsworthian picture of the old man of Corycus,\* happy as a king in his few acres of garden ground. Not much more than half of the *Georgics* is occupied with instruction about husbandry. The rest is taken up with episodes and digressions. Yet these digressions are not otiose. They may, like the description of the chariot race (iii. 103), or the cattle plague (ii. 478), be introduced for the sake of ornament and to avoid tedium, but they are always strictly relevant to the subject. Their introduction is unforced. The description of spring (ii. 342) follows naturally on the statement that spring is the best time for planting. The picture of a contest between two bulls (iii. 199-241) fitly succeeds the injunction to keep bulls apart during the breeding season, and fitly leads on to the passage on the power of love in creation (iii. 242-283) which follows. Often they play a part in the argument. The contrast between the reign of Jupiter and the Golden Age (i. 121-146) contains the religious sanction for labour, the necessity for which has just been emphasised. In particular, the three great episodes of the first two books set forth the relation of husbandry to the national life. In the first, the signs announcing Cæsar's death and the evils which they portended (i. 462-514), Virgil indicates the unrest and disorganisation which followed the death of Julius Cæsar, the need for a saviour of society and of such a regeneration as might be effected by a revival of agriculture. The second (ii. 135-75) contains the praise of Italy, the land where this regenera-

tion was to be accomplished. The third, the praise of country life (ll. 458-542), indicates the manner of this regeneration, which is to be found in an existence simple and laborious, like that of the old husbandmen who had made Rome great, yet enriched by the sense of beauty and the charm of old memories, and so realising the blessedness of a fancied age of gold.\*

Artistic in arrangement, the charm of the poem is enhanced by harmonious verse and by language rich in literary and mythological allusion. That Virgil dignifies the humblest implements of husbandry by recalling associations which belong to them as pertaining to an ancient and honourable art, that waggons are the "slow-rolling wains of our Lady of Eleusis" and hurdles "Celeus' light wattled ware" is but one aspect of this allusiveness, that which is particularly connected with his subject. Everywhere common things are qualified by epithets intended to revive the charm shed over them by the literary art of Hellas, or again they are touched in a phrase reminiscent of some ancient and familiar tale. Acorns are "Chaonian," cranes "the cranes of Strymon," sea birds "Halcyons beloved of Thetis," and the poplar "the shady tree which gave Hercules his crown." There is the delight in names of melodious sound. Is there occasion to speak of mountains? We have "Athos and Rhodope and the high Ceraunian crags." Of nymphs? Here are "Drymo and Xantho, Ligea and Cymodoce." Stars, which for an older poet were but "the austere constellations of the night," appear

\* In this account of the *Georgics* I am largely indebted to Professor Sellar's *Virgil*, and in the following remarks on Virgil's art and spirit to the section on "the execution of the poem" in A. Sidgwick's edition of *Virgil*, Intro.



in Virgil as "the Cyllenian fire," "the daughters of Atlas," or

*Pleiads and Hyads and Lycaon's child*

*Bright Arctos.*

1 138 (Rhoades' Translation)

This is Alexandrinism, and it does not always please. To equip the African herdsman with Laconian hound and Cretan quiver appears unnecessary (iii. 343); and Lucretius' "medicine muttered low in voiceless fear" seems a more natural and a more forcible expression of man's helplessness in the face of a devastating plague than to say with Virgil that "the learned in the art, Chiron son of Philyra and Amythaon's son Melampus gave ground" (iii. 529). As a rule, however, Virgil is restrained in the use of ornament by unerring tact. Nor has he any need to rely for his charm on literary association alone. In the power of calling up a picture, often by a single word, he is unsurpassed. He would speak of iron, and the "stripped forgers" are before our eyes; he would indicate the Antipodes, and our imagination is stirred by a vision of the chariot of morning, the dying embers of day, and the round world girdled with ever-travelling light.\* One reason why the reader feels no weariness is that Virgil feels none himself:

*But see time unreturning hastes away*

*While with delight from point to point we stray.* 111 285.

A countryman and possessed by "the glory of the countryside divine," his love for his subject is unmis-takable. It shows itself in the sympathy which personifies inanimate things and attributes human feelings to the brute creation. Thus the grafted tree "marvels at strange

<sup>1</sup> *Nosque ubi primus equis oriens adflavit anheli*

*Illi sera rubens accendit lumina vesper.* 1 250.

fruits and apples not her own," and the ox "grieves" at the death of his yokefellow. It appears again in a certain playfulness which, absent from the *Æneid*, is specially characteristic of the *Georgics*. This playfulness finds expression in the gentle irony with which the poet protests that "tufa and chalk call no other land their like to furnish dainty food and yield winding retreats for serpents" (ii. 214), in the petulance with which he refers to the goose as "incorrigible" (*improbus*) and cold as "rascally" (*sceleratum*), and in the humorous exaggeration with which he speaks of the rustling "forest" of lupine (i. 75). This last is a note which is struck again and again in the fourth Georgic. The book opens with a declaration of the writer's intention to tell of "high-hearted chieftains and a whole nation's ordered works and ways, tribes and battles" (iv. 4). He puts himself on a level with the little folk and sees things from their point of view.

Equally pervasive and more important as supplying the motive and inspiration of the poem is Virgil's patriotic feeling. It may be detected under a strange and repellent form in the dedication to Augustus (i. 24) which with the mythological language seems to reproduce the adulatory tone of the court-poet of Alexandria; but it speaks more naturally in Virgil's distress over the evils caused by the Civil war (i. 489-514), in the earnestness of his prayers for the safety of the saviour of society—

*This youth at least a ruined age to save*

*Forbid not—*

*l c 500.*

in the enthusiasm with which he depicts the life in which his countrymen were to find repose and happiness, and above all in the praises of the land in which this regeneration was to be consummated (ii. 136-170). The passage

which enumerates the special glories of Italy, her citadels "piled by the hand of man upon precipitous crags," her rivers "gliding beneath ancient walls," her great lakes Como and Garda, broad and boisterous as the sea, and culminates in the apostrophe

*Hail, realm Saturnian, mighty motherland  
Of harvests and of men !* lc 173

contains perhaps the most characteristic expression of patriotism in the *Georgics*, for if the *Æneid* is the sacred book of Rome, the *Georgics* are "the psalm of Italy." \*

The success of the *Georgics* and Virgil's evident happiness in his subject have suggested the view that Virgil's true vocation was that of a poet of the country, and that in attempting epic he made a mistake. In face of the unquestionable greatness of his achievement in the *Æneid* this opinion, though it was that of so good a judge of poetry as Keble, is almost a paradox. In any case Virgil's motives in making the attempt are easily intelligible. Sensitive to all the influences of his age, he sought to give them more comprehensive expression than could be effected through the medium of pastoral idyll or agricultural didactic. Moreover, in view of the form assumed by Roman literary aspiration it was natural that, having attained the position of the Roman Theocritus and the Roman Hesiod, he should endeavour to scale the last height of Parnassus and appear as the Roman Homer. Nor was the idea of writing epic a recent one with him : already, before the publication of the *Eclogues*, he had attempted to write a poem on the Alban kings, but had abandoned the project because he found it unsuitable for poetic treatment. As late as the

\* F. Myers, *Classical Essays*, p. 152.

date of the introduction to the third book of the *Georgics* he had not reached a final decision as to what his epic subject was to be. In this introduction (G. iii. 46) he declares that soon he will "set to and sing the gallant fights of Cæsar." Thus if the statement of Servius that Augustus "proposed the *Æneid*" to Virgil be true, this does not imply that he imposed upon the poet a topic which he had neither contemplated nor desired, but rather that by a happy suggestion he enabled him to combine in a single poem two at least of the literary projects which had floated before his mind. The writing of an *Æneid* would give Virgil the opportunity at once to celebrate the origins of Rome, and if not to "sing the gallant fights of Cæsar," at any rate to connect the greatness of Rome with the traditions of the ruling house, and to adumbrate the ruler under a guise more agreeable to him than that of a conqueror and a man of blood. For, by a combination of circumstances so strange as to make it one of the curiosities in the history of myth, the legend of the Trojan origin of the Romans had come to be the official account of the beginnings of the State, and by a second coincidence Octavian, as the adopted son of Julius Cæsar, found himself the representative of the premier "Trojan" \* family and inheritor of a claim to trace his ancestry to Æneas, son of Venus and mythical founder of the Roman race.

To the *Æneid* Virgil devoted the rest of his life (29-19 B.C.), first making a draft in prose and then

\* About the time of Sulla it became the fashion for noble families to trace back to Trojan heroes. Varro mentions thirty "Trojan" families. The family of Lucretius' patron Memmius claimed some special connection with Venus. But Julius Cæsar had been more successful in advertising the divine origin of the *gens Iulia*. Suetonius, *Iulius*, vi.

versifying it, not consecutively, but here and there as the fancy took him.

An *Odyssey* of wanderings, followed by an *Iliad* of battles, it is a combination ("contamination" was the Latin word) on a great scale. Incident and simile are freely borrowed from Homer. It was, in fact, Virgil's aim to make the glories of Greek epic live again for his countrymen in Roman guise. But it was impossible for Virgil, writing in Augustan days, to reproduce the primitive tone of an epic born when the world was young. He could not remain unaffected by all that had come to being in the interval—Greek tragedy, Greek philosophy, the learning and the sentiment of Alexandria. Each of these influences is discernible in the *Æneid*: that of tragedy in the narrative of the fall of Troy, by a dramatic irony self-destroyed in defiance of warning and prediction; or in those two great dramas in which the passions of an individual, a Dido, a Turnus, are shattered against unyielding fate; that of philosophy in the religious speculation, vague but profound, which pervades the poem, and is so entirely apart from the Olympic machinery which ostensibly directs events; that of Alexandria in the treatment of the passion of the Carthaginian queen, who owes something to Catullus' Ariadne, but more to the Medea of Apollonius Rhodius.

More than this, if the poem was to succeed it was necessary that, besides conforming to the literary standards, it should embody the thoughts and aspirations of the age to which it was addressed. A story told for the story's sake would not suffice. That the true subject for a Roman epic was Rome had been realised long ago by Nævius and Ennius. But their epics, if they can be called so—annalistic recitals prefaced by mythological introductions

—were inartistic, and their patriotism, however real, was something less complex and less pervasive than the dominant sentiment of the Augustan Age. Of the elements of which it was composed some have been already mentioned (p. 235). The most important of them was the realisation by Rome of her own greatness and her amazing success. Now success in the Roman mind was associated with the strict performance of religious duties; in other words, it was conceived of as due to the favour of Heaven thus won, and this conviction it was the purpose and the effect of the religious revival inaugurated by Augustus to accentuate. Nor were there wanting loyalty and gratitude to Augustus himself, who had given peace for strife, saved the laborious acquisitions of ages from being swept away in a welter of blood, and ushered in an era which promised to be yet more splendid than the glorious past. The *Æneid* was a poem with a purpose—and a purpose which closely corresponded with the feelings just indicated. It was intended to express the greatness of Rome attained under a divine dispensation, and culminating in the rule of Augustus.

That the interest of the *Æneid* is national rather than personal is indicated at the outset. If the introduction begins like that of the *Odyssey*, by reference to an individual, "arms and the man I sing," it ends with the more significant comment:

*Such pains it cost to build the Roman State.\**

The roll of Roman heroes in the sixth book, the catalogue of Italian tribes in the seventh, the enumeration of localities in what was afterwards the site of Rome, and the representation on the shield of Æneas of the most

\* *Tantac molis erat Romanam condere gentem.* A. 1. 133.

remarkable scenes in Roman history in the eighth, suffice to show that throughout the poem its national character is always kept in view.

That the greatness of Rome was foreordained by Providence, and achieved under its guidance, is apparent in every line of the *Æneid*, for which the words of Creusa's ghost to Æneas,

*Not undesigned of Heaven  
These things befall.*      ll. 777

might serve as a motto.\*

Over all is Fate, and in her book Rome's charter (*sic volvere Parcas*). Then come the gods, busy but effective only within the limits ordained by Fate, of which Jupiter is the repository and the interpreter. Of these higher powers Æneas is but the instrument. He is guided on his way by omens, dreams, apparitions, warnings, encouragements. He on his part neglects no means of ascertaining the divine will. He takes no step without engaging in prayer, and is careful to offer sacrifice with the most scrupulous correctness of ritual. It is here that the religious significance of the *Æneid*, and the part played by Virgil in the religious revival fostered by Augustus, come into view. He accentuates the importance and the antiquity of the State religion; and Roman religious observances, even Roman liturgical language, receive an added sanction by being associated with critical moments in the career of the founder of the race.

Lastly, this Heaven-ordained career of Rome is traced downward to the present day, and shown to have its consummation in the rule of Augustus. The *Æneid* contains no such allusion to a deification of the Emperor

\* *Non hæc sine numine divum eveniunt.*

as that which disfigures the *Georgics*; but the forecast of the nation's future, with which early in the poem\* Jupiter soothes the apprehensions of Venus, envisages the ending of the Civil wars and the closing of the temple of Janus; and the latest scenes of Roman history depicted on the shield of Æneas show Augustus, victorious over Antony, Cleopatra, and the anti-national deities of the East, celebrating a triple triumph over conquered nations in the furthest extremities of the earth, while it is thus that Anchises designates him among the makers of Rome.

*This, this is he—long promised, oft foretold—  
Augustus Cæsar He the age of gold,  
God-born himself, in Latium shall restore  
And rule the land that Saturn ruled before †*

VI. 791

So far from overweighting the poem, this wealth of meaning and allusion constitutes its heart and soul. Yet there are drawbacks to a plot which consists in the working out of a divine purpose. As the instrument of Heaven Æneas lacks personal initiative. More than this, with every allowance for all that he has lost and suffered, he seems almost unnecessarily wanting in interest in the affairs in which he is called upon to bear a part. In the first words he utters‡ he expresses regret that he had not fallen beneath the walls of Troy. He tells Dido—it is a poor excuse for his desertion—that had the fates allowed him to live as he desired he would have devoted himself to tending the ashes of his forefathers and rebuilding his ruined city.§ Not without reason does Mercury (iv. 272) imply that he is “in no wise stirred” by enthusiasm for his glorious destiny.

\* 1 254

† Trans. by E. Fairfax Taylor (Temple Classics).

‡ 1 94

§ A. iv 340.



Still in this matter some change is traceable (vi. 889) ; and, this apart, Æneas' very absence of enthusiasm for his task accentuates the tenacity with which he persists in it. Nor is this his only heroic trait. There is the temper of the leader in the man who can "feign a hopeful countenance" and "crush his grief deep down in his heart" (i. 209). Steadfast endurance speaks in his words to the Sibyl :

*Priestess, no shape of toil before these eyes  
Or new or unexpected can arise.*      vi. 104

and unsurpassable dignity in the superb boast, made as a plea that he should be permitted to undertake a quest which few before him had dared, "I too from highest Jove descend" (vi. 123). At the same time, when his blood is up, Æneas is a pretty fighter. He lays about him like Briareus hundred-armed and hundred-handed (x. 565). Indeed the traditional Homeric hero and the humane Augustan warrior are not quite consistently combined. The primitive ferocity with which he reserves eight captives to be sacrificed to the shades of the slaughtered Pallas appears alien from his temperament (x. 518). For, next to the sense of duty, humanity is the prevailing element in the character of Æneas, and faithfulness to his word (xii. 314) combines with pity for a fallen foe (x. 821) to show in him some anticipation, limited in its application, of the mediæval conception of chivalry.

Very different is the personality of Dido. Victim of the destiny of which Æneas is the instrument, she is as intense as he is apathetic. Vanquished by a passion overpowering but not ignoble, more appealing in her humiliation because so queenly, so gracious in her prosperity, feminine in her illogical reproaches, sublime in

her final appeal for vengeance, she has touched the hearts of many since Augustine.

Turnus stirs no such feelings. He is no patriot fighting for fatherland, as he has sometimes been represented; no wronged lover maintaining outraged rights. For Æneas is more missionary than invader, and Latinus has broken no pact when, in obedience to the oracles of Faunus, he prefers a Trojan to a Rutulian son-in-law. Boaster and barbarian, it is only when the odds against him become overwhelming that Turnus moves us. Then indeed we are aware of the dignity of his rejoinder to his mightier assailant :

*Not me, fierce man, thy wrathful words affright,  
The gods affright, and Jupiter my foe.\**

And when Virgil's masterly reproduction of Homer's simile shows him fighting as one in a dream (xii. 908) who strives but cannot stir, we know something of the pity which for a moment stayed the hand of Æneas.

Mezentius, despiser of the gods, a stolid and ferocious savage, only shaken by the loss of his son, is strongly drawn. But the other characters in the *Æneid* are shadowy. Except the steersman Palinurus, who has pride in his profession and a well-grounded mistrust of the element with which he has to deal, the Trojans are mere pegs for epithets. Evander is an abstract type, symbolic of the virtues of a golden age. Latinus, the *fainéant* king, hardly appears; the frenzy of Amata is a brief episode; and Lavinia, whose only recorded achievement is a becoming blush, is yet more insignificant. "As

*Non me tua fervida terrent  
Dicta, ferox, di me terrent et Jupiter hostis*

for the young heroes and heroines of whose exploits and deaths the last six books are full—Nisus and Euryalus, Pallas and Lausus, the Volscian Amazon Camilla—Virgil makes us pity but does not make us see them. Without passions, ideas, or character—for it is no character to die young—they have nothing to distinguish them from each other.”\*

A survey of the comparative merits of the books of the *Æneid* reveals a similar failure of creative power. It will be generally agreed that of the three books † which Virgil read to Augustus as specimens of his work, two at any rate are among the greatest of the twelve. The nightmare succession of tremendous scenes through which the hero is hurried, ended abruptly by the dawn which reveals the forlorn multitude assembled for exile and brings the beginning of the new life, gives a high place to the second book. But for most readers it is eclipsed by the tragedy of Dido in the fourth book, a tragedy developed by Virgil with supreme rhetorical skill and a surprising insight into the workings of the female heart. And the imagination, the romance, the religious solemnity, and the sublime patriotism revealed in the visit of Æneas to the nether world in the sixth book, show Virgil at the height of his achievement. In any comparison of the merits of the first and the second half of the poem it is likely that the excellences of the three books cited will always turn the scale against the second. It is true that Virgil himself rightly recognises the period of achievement as more important in the development of the poem than that of preparation.

*A larger theme unfolds, a loftier lay.* vii. 44

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\* Pichon, *Lat. Lit.*, 347, to whom I am much indebted in this estimate of the minor characters. † Bks. II, IV, VI.

It is true again that in the later books we have the added interest of hearing the Italian singer on Italian soil ; and that in consequence there is in certain directions a call for greater independence of his models, to which, notably in the eighth book, he responds with success. Again, it has been pointed out that in the versification there is a continued development throughout the work ; also that the majority of the lines which live in the memory occur in the last six books. Yet for all this the second half of the *Æneid* is placed at a disadvantage by the exigencies of the "mighty war." There are long and dreary tracts of fighting in the three last books in which Virgil seems to be somewhat wearily conforming to an outworn epic tradition. Apart from this, although at the close of the poem Virgil rises to the height of the occasion, are these Latian happenings really so engrossing as those of the earlier books ? Some thought of lost Creusa and deserted Dido impairs our interest in the union of Æneas with Lavinia : a *mariage de convenance*—though certainly made in heaven.

But it is not in the character-drawing that the greatness of the *Æneid* is to be found. Rather does it consist in the realisation of a conception so comprehensive, so complex, and so extraordinarily difficult of execution. To write a heroic epic in a civilised age, to animate old forms with a modern purpose, to piece together Hellenic and national legend, to reproduce Homeric incidents in different connections and with an altered significance, to combine primitive *naïveté* and Augustan standards of life and thought, traditional religion with philosophic speculation, such were some of the difficulties with which Virgil had to cope. So keenly did he feel them that he declared that he had been almost mad to undertake the

task. That these difficulties were not entirely overcome was in part due to the fact that the work did not receive the author's final touch. In the framework of the poem (which Virgil first drafted in prose and then worked at here and there as the fancy took him) some gaps and inconsistencies may be detected. Of the lines of which he said that he licked them into shape as a bear her cubs, some remain incomplete. Effective as these half lines sometimes are—for it may well have been that it was the inevitability of the pause which constituted the difficulty of continuation—it is clear from a number of instances that they were meant to be completed. Moreover, there are completed lines in which critics have thought that they can detect some of those stopgaps (*libicines*) which Virgil allowed to stand for the moment in order to avoid arresting the flow of his inspiration. When in the year 19 B.C. he started on a journey to Greece and Asia he intended to spend three years on revising the *Æneid* and then to devote the remainder of his life to philosophy. But meeting Augustus in Greece, and persuaded to return with him earlier than he had contemplated, he fell ill at Megara and died a few days after he had reached Brundisium. Before setting out he had charged Varius to burn the *Æneid* if anything happened to him. The injunction supplies the measure of Virgil's standard of perfection ; but it was not carried out. By the orders of Augustus Virgil's literary executors, Varius and Plotius Tucca, published the poem, except for a few necessary corrections, as it stood.

Complete or incomplete it was enough. Despite some temporary detraction the *Æneid* was at once recognised as a masterpiece ; and its publication forms a landmark in the development of Latin Literature. Whether by

imitation or reaction it profoundly affected all subsequent literary production, not in poetry only but also in prose. For in Virgil Latin poetry had flowered—a slightly languorous bloom—for as the pressure of external warfare had arrested the independent development of the native Latin Muse, so by a strange fatality internal strife interrupted the culminating period of Græco-Roman literature, and caused the outcome of her most perfect art to lack something of the virility which characterises the greatest products of the last days of the Free State—but none the less a consummate inflorescence.

Virgil's mastery over the hexameter is unapproached. In his hands it acquired a flow, a melody, and a variety of tone which it had never shown before and, despite imitation, was never to show again. The technical expedients by which this result was achieved are susceptible of analysis. By a freer use of elision, by continual change in pause and *cæsura*, and in the arrangement of feet and distribution of words among them, he secures great variety of rhythm. In particular by constantly breaking the line in a different place he avoids the monotony of which the reader is conscious in the self-contained hexameters of Lucretius and Catullus. Yet this is never felt to be a mechanical expedient. Nor is it. Everywhere it corresponds with the thought, and thus occurs precisely at that point where it is most effective. This coincidence of mental and metrical arrest, consistently maintained, is most readily illustrated by those more obvious instances where there is something in the nature of a climax, followed by a resumption in a slightly different tone.

In lines winged with the speed of hope Virgil tells how all the dangers had been overpast, and how rescued Eurydice was nearing the upper air, heedfully observing

the conditions of Proserpine and following in Orpheus' steps, when in his love for her he was seized with sudden madness, forgivable, as is emphasised in every word, but not to be forgiven by powers to whom pity was unknown.

*He stood, and on Eurydice his own  
Now on the very threshold of the light,  
Forgetting and foredone, looked back*

G. iv. 489

In a famous passage in the sixth *Æneid* the hero questions Anchises as to the identity of a youthful shade, august but melancholy, which moves near that of the conqueror of Syracuse. Speaking in tones of solemn sadness, Anchises at first puts aside the question, then with sympathetic hesitancy prepares his hearer for a great but inevitable blow, finally with grieved reluctance reveals the name :

*Ah, hapless youth, if Fate's un pitying doom,  
May yet by any means be broken, thou  
Shalt be Marcellus.*

A. vi 882

The climax is followed in the first passage by the sad comment,

*Therewith was all  
His labour lost.*

In the second by the mournful injunction,

*Bring me lilies, bring  
Lilies fullhanded.*

In each case with a change of tone, unmistakable and telling.

This natural and effective variation of pause is but one manifestation of an intimate connection between the meaning and the movement of the verse which is

everywhere discernible. The gallop of horses,\* the majestic gait of a goddess,† the slow swing of ponderous hammers in the hands of giants,‡ even the perilous poise of a rock in act to fall,§ find their counterpart in the rhythm. As with the movement so too with the sound of the line. Here is the trumpet-note of summons,|| here the long-drawn deep-toned music which echoes all that language can convey of majesty and awe,¶ and here the regretful cadence, the dying fall, which seem the very voice of baffled effort and disappointed hope \*\*

A special device by which Virgil secures the correspondence of sound with meaning is alliteration. True to Italian tradition, he can use it when he wishes to be emphatic in the old sledge-hammer fashion in which it was employed by Ennius or Plautus or the forgotten writers of Saturnians.†† But it may become in his hands something much more subtle. It can suggest the smooth gliding of the serpent,‡‡ the hissing of the surge upon the

· *Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*

A. viii. 596

† *Ast ego quæ divum incedo regina, Jovisque  
Et soror et coniux*

A. i. 46

‡ *Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt  
In numerum, versantque tenaci forcipe massam.*

A. viii. 452.

§ *Atra silex iam iam lapsura cadentique  
Imminet adsimilis.*

A. vi. 602.

|| *A. iv. 625, Exorare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.*

¶ *A. vi. 376*      ¶\* *A. vi. 314.*

†† *Non patriæ validas in viscera vertite vires.*

A. vi. 833.

‡‡ *Ille inter vestes, et levra pectora lapsus  
Volvitur attactu nullo, etc.*

A. vii. 349



rocks,\* or the echoing cry of wild fowl, heard ever more faintly along river bank or Asian mere.†

When art so consummate as this became the medium for the expression of a mind religious, imaginative, questioning, sensitive to every form of beauty, and profoundly sympathetic, it is no wonder that the world has felt the spell. And Virgil has infused much of his personality into his poems. The passion for nature which made him a lover of the woods and streams is revealed in a hundred vignettes: the mariner furling his drenched sails, or humid night hurrying headlong from the skies: in innumerable graphic similes, that, for instance, in which Æneas, hearing from the roof of Anchises' house the first mutterings of the conflict which tells that the Greeks are within the walls of Troy, is compared with a shepherd who from the summit of some crag hears uncomprehending the indistinct murmur of fire or flood which is to bring havoc on forest or cultivated lands; or that other, twice utilised by Virgil, and potent in its suggestion of dreariness and chill, wherein the thronging ghosts are likened to withered leaves whirled by autumn winds, or flocks of migrating birds gathered for flight to sunnier lands.

The pity, which was one of his most salient traits, becomes the appanage of his noblest characters.

*Something I know of trouble, and therefore  
Learn how to help the suffering.* A. i 630

Thus speaks Dido, and the same quality is exemplified in

\* *Obiectæ salsa spumant aspergine cautes.*  
A. iii 534

† *Sonat amnis et Asia longe  
Pulsa palus*  
A. vii. 700

*Æneas.* A doomed city, a woman's hopeless love, young warriors slain untimely, the hopes of a nation blasted by the death of a darling prince, these, and not these alone, stir Virgil's pity, which extends to all "the doubtful doom of humankind."

His utterances, sometimes expressed with a vague simplicity which defies translation,\* yet charged with a strange intensity of feeling, seem to carry meanings above and beyond those in which they satisfy the requirements of their immediate context. It is thus that they have become words of power; thus (to cite two instances out of many) that the warning of Polydorus,†

*Ah! fly the cruel land, the hungry shore,*

*A III, 44*

could seem to Savonarola a call to abandon the things of earth, and Dido's appeal to a champion yet unborn could animate the cloistered soul of Newman to combat and to leadership.

It is the supreme achievement of Virgil that he has expressed the spirit of a people and not a little of the heart of humanity.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IX

### POEMS SOMETIMES ATTRIBUTED TO VIRGIL

THE *Gnat* (*Culex*) is an epyllion in 414 hexameters. The subject is as follows. A gnat stings a sleeping shepherd. The shepherd wakes and kills first the gnat and then a snake which had been on the point of biting him. Hereafter the ghost of the gnat appears, describes the other world, and asks for a grave. This

\* An instance is the famous *sunt lacrimæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt*. *Æn.* I. 462

† F. W. H. Myers (*Classical Essays*, p. 116), who gives other instances. My obligations to Myers' Essay on Virgil will be apparent.

the shepherd gives, and on it inscribes an epitaph in which he recognises the gnat as his preserver.

The external evidence for the authenticity of the *Culex* is strong. Suetonius says Virgil wrote a *Culex* which seems to have been the same as that which we possess, for he quotes the epitaph above mentioned Lucan, as quoted in his life by Suetonius, Martial and Statius all believed that Virgil was the author of a poem with this title.

Nor are the arguments against its authenticity which are based on internal evidence irrefragable. Skutsch (*Aus Virgils Fruhzelt*, p. 125 ff) argues that those passages in the *Culex* which are parallel to passages in Virgil (the praise of country life, the description of the infernal regions, and the episode of Orpheus and Eurydice), are not *imitated* from Virgil. Again, the inference, drawn from the absence of elisions in the *Culex*, that it is later in date than Virgil's time, is not conclusive. Similar freedom from elisions is to be found, e.g., in Horace, Epode 17, date 40 B.C. The *Culex* is addressed to Octavius. The terms used, *sancle puer, venerande*, can have been applied to no other than to the young Octavius who was afterwards Augustus. Therefore it must have been written before Octavius' adoption in 44 B.C., unless it was a forgery. But it bears no marks of being a forgery. A forger would have studied and reproduced Virgil's language.

Skutsch concludes that the *Culex* was written at the latest in 44 B.C. and it is possible that Donatus gave this as the date of Virgil's *Culex* \*

But even Skutsch does not venture to draw the conclusion that the *Culex* was written by Virgil. The difficulty presented by its dissimilarity from Virgil's style is too great. Every allowance may be made on the supposition that it was a youthful work (though there is good reason for preferring the reading xxvi to xvi), that Virgil allowed makeshift lines to stand in his early drafts, and that the *Culex* never received the finishing touch. The laboured and inflated style is in marked contrast with the ease and grace of certain poems (e.g. *Calaepton*, 5) which have been reasonably placed among Virgil's juvenilia. Nor is it easy

\* (*fecit*). *culicem cum esset annorum xvi* (i.e. 54 B.C.). Donatus' *Life of Virgil*, p. 58, R, where Vollmer, relying on Statius Silv. 2.7.73, would read xxvi, making the date 44 B.C.

to believe Virgil guilty of the tactlessness involved in treating a subject suited for an epigram in over 400 hexameters.

We need not draw the difficult conclusion that Virgil did actually write a *Culex*, that it was extant for a time, and that it was displaced by an inferior production by another hand before the time of Lucan. If Virgil did write a *Culex* it was never published, and was suppressed at his death, and scholars of Claudian times may have believed that in the *Culex* of the *Appendix*, a work suitable in date and subject, they had discovered the suppressed poem. But he may never have written such a poem (Plessis, *Poesie Latine*, p. 260, Ribbeck, *Römische Dichtung*, II. 439), and the idea that he did so may have been suggested by the existence of the *Culex* which we possess. Only, of course, this hypothesis of the acceptance of a non-Virgilian *Culex* in Claudian times involves the difficulty (it is not necessarily insuperable) of believing that modern scholars can detect a non-Virgilian poem better than Lucan, Martial, or even so enthusiastic a Virgilian as Statius. The last, it is true, was aware of its inferiority of style.

The *Sea-mew* (*Ciris*, 541 hexameters) describes how Scylla, daughter of Nisus, King of Megara, enamoured of Minos, who is besieging her native city, cuts from her father's head the purple lock on which his and his city's safety depends, how Nisus, so far from feeling gratitude for the treachery by which he has profited, drags Scylla over the sea bound to the stern of his ship, until the gods take pity upon her and she is changed into a sea-mew, while her father is changed into an osprey. It has been shown by Skutsch that the *Ciris* was probably by Gallus, to whose treatment of the subject Virgil alludes in *E* vi 74. Accordingly it is earlier in date than this eclogue, earlier, that is, than 41 or 40 B.C.

The *Lydia* and the *Dirae* are both connected with the ejection of Italian farmers (41 B.C.), to make room for the veterans, from which Virgil suffered, and this is perhaps the reason why they have been attributed to him. They appear in the MSS. as a single poem, of which the first 103 hexameters constitute the *Dirae*, and the remaining 80 the *Lydia*. The latter is prior in time, for Lydia appears as a girl in this, as a woman in the *Dirae*. In the *Lydia* the writer begins by expressing his envy of the fields which still possess his Lydia while he is forced to depart, and proceeds to deplore the hardness of a life which compels

lovers to separate. The *Dirae* consists of curses imprecated on the owner's property now that it has passed into the possession of a soldier. The curses are introduced by intermittent invocations or addresses to a friend, one Battarus, which constitute a kind of refrain. There is no reason to doubt that both these poems were by the same author. If the *Lydia* is the more attractive this is due to the subject rather than to the execution, which is on the same level in both. This author was not Virgil, though he may well have belonged to his circle. The temper in which Virgil took the confiscation of his farm is quite different from that of the author of the *Dirae*. The landscape is not that of the *Eclogues*. The diction has a precision which is distinct from the vague suggestiveness of Virgil.

The *Salad* (*Moretum*) is a minute and realistic description of how a peasant rises in the morning while it is yet dark, lights his fire, bakes his bread, culls herbs in his garden, pounds them in a mortar, and so sets forth to work secured against hunger for the day. There is no external evidence for the attribution of the *Moretum* to Virgil. It is not mentioned as Virgil's by Suetonius or Servius. It was not included in the *Appendix Virgiliana* till the Middle Ages. Internal evidence shows that it belongs to the age of Virgil. But to say with Mackail (*Class. Review*, May 1908) that "the internal evidence for the Virgilian authorship of the *Moretum* is so good that it would require but little external support" is surely going too far. It is a pleasing poem. It treats humble subjects without becoming either trivial or vulgar. But the author has no eye or thought for anything but the matter in hand. He is purely objective, as in his minute description of the characteristics of the negress (ll. 232-5). He writes without allusiveness, without consciousness of a larger background. Virgil with all his delight in the humble details of country life did not write thus in the *Georgics*, and it is difficult to believe that in the *Moretum* we have a preliminary study which prepared the poet to draw such pictures as those of the old gardener of Tarentum (*G.* iv. 125) or the occupations of a winter's night in an Italian farmhouse (*G.* i. 286-96).

*The Girl at the Inn* (*Copa*) is an elegiac poem of nineteen couplets, full of life and freshness. A Syrian girl, castanets in hand, dances at the door of a tavern, invites the passers by to

enter by describing the cheer to be found within, and ends with an exhortation to drink and enjoy life, for death is coming. The Epicureanism of the close, jaunty and reckless, is different from that in which Virgil (in *Catalepton* vii.) sought emancipation of life from every care. The versification resembles that of Propertius and so suggests a date somewhere about 16 B. C. In view of these considerations the occurrence in the poem of a line and two or three expressions found in Virgil's works must be explained as due rather to imitation by some other than Virgil than to anticipation by Virgil himself of what he subsequently used in different connections.

## X

### HORACE

BRISK, genial, practical, and a lover of society, QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS (65-8 B.C.) presents in many ways a complete contrast to the poet with whom he is so closely associated. But some points they have in common. Both are thorough artists. Both are full of the determination, characteristic of the Augustan Age, to study the best models and to achieve a higher level of workmanship and a more delicate finish than had yet been attained by Latin writers. Both felt the influences of their time, its initial anxieties, its broadening hopes, its assured tranquillity. Born at Venusia five years later than Virgil, Horace was of yet humbler social standing. But his father, a freedman and an auctioneer's clerk, resolved to give his son the education of a gentleman. He took him to Rome to be taught in a fashionable school, that kept by the rod-loving Orbilius, and attended him to and from the school in person. Moreover, he was teacher as well as attendant. If it be true that he taught his son how to conduct himself by pointing to concrete examples of what to do and what to avoid, he early inoculated Horace with that habit of social criticism which later he was to turn to so good an account. In due course Horace was sent to learn philosophy at the University of Athens and so put a finishing touch to his

education. He was thus occupied when (44 B.C.) Cæsar was assassinated. Like others among the fashionable young Romans with whom he was associating, Horace joined Brutus, and received from him a commission as a military tribune. He attended Brutus in Asia (43 B.C.), and a year later fought at Philippi. The issue of the battle seemed fatal to his prospects. He returned to Rome (41 B.C.) "with wings clipped." His father was dead, his property confiscated. In order to make a living he became a clerk in the Treasury, and at the same time was impelled, he tells us, by "the courage of poverty" to write verses. The verses in question are represented by the earliest of the *Epodes* and *Satires*. Quick tempered—for these were the days of his hot youth, "when Plancus was consul" (40 B.C.)—he produced satiric invectives in the manner of Archilochus. At the same time he was attracted by the outspoken and unconventional satire of Lucilius. The first of his *Satires* (I. vii.), an account quite in the Lucilian manner of a lawsuit of which he had been an amused witness when in the retinue of Brutus, was probably composed before his reverse of fortune.

His earliest productions are characterised by a certain coarseness and personal rancour. The time during which they were produced was not the happiest of Horace's life. He was something of a Bohemian, and the company he kept was not of the best. But his talent won him friends of a higher stamp. Virgil and Varius introduced him (39 B.C.) to Mæcenas, who after a brief interval admitted him to his circle. Thus began a friendship which lasted thirty years and was only ended by Mæcenas' death (8 B.C.) In the autumn of 38 B.C., when Mæcenas was proceeding on a diplomatic mission to Athens, Horace accompanied him as far as



Brundisium, and commemorated the journey in one of his *Satires* (i. 5). Five years later (33 B.C.) he received from his patron the gift of a farm in the Sabine territory which secured him independence and the retirement which he required for poetical production. In 35 B.C. he published the first and in 30 B.C. the second book of *Satires*. The *Epodes*, begun, as has been seen, as early as 40 B.C., contain some of his earliest work; but he was long\* in completing the collection, and it was not published till 30 B.C. This year marks the end of the first period of Horace's literary career. The effect of his friendship with Mæcenas is to be seen in an increased geniality of tone in the works subsequent to the introduction. These show affection for Mæcenas, but no enthusiasm for Augustus. There is but one reference to him, as "the invincible Cæsar," in the second book of *Satires*.† The *Epodes*, except the ninth, written after the battle of Actium, show only despondency as to the political outlook.

The next eight years (30-23 B.C.) Horace devoted to naturalising the lyric metres of Sappho and Alcæus in the Latin tongue. During this period he came to know Augustus, and growing conviction led him to give such support as a poet might to his ideas of national regeneration. With the completion of the first three books of the *Odes* he felt that he had made his bid for fame: "I have reared," he says, "a monument more enduring than brass" (C. III. xxx. 1). "It shall be told that I was the first who adapted to Italian measures the Æolian lay."

When Horace wrote thus he thought that he had done

\* *Epod.* xiv. 8.

† S II i. 11.

with lyrics. He reverted to the more congenial\* metre of the *Satires*, and it seemed as if his subsequent production would take the form of epistles embodying moral teaching and literary criticism. At the opening of the first book of the *Epistles*, published in 20 B.C., he announced that he was laying aside "poetry and other toys," and was wholly concerned in the study of what was true and becoming.†

But circumstances required that he should still write lyric poetry. In Horace's own words: "I who protest that I write no poetry am found to be a bigger liar than the Parthians" (*Epp.* II. 1. 3). The death of Virgil in 19 B.C. left Horace the most prominent Augustan poet. This fact was recognised in the commission given to him to write an ode, *Carmen Sæculare*, for the secular games celebrated by Augustus in 17 B.C. Three years later Augustus requested him to commemorate the victories won by Drusus and Tiberius over the Vindelici and Rhæti (14 B.C.) The *Odes* produced in deference to this command were published about 13 B.C., together with others on public affairs and a few more in Horace's lighter vein, as a fourth book of *Odes*, which was dedicated to Augustus.

This done, Horace returned to literary criticism in the second book of *Epistles* (12 B.C.) and the *Ars Poetica*. Owing to the similarity of the language in which Horace indicates his attitude in the latter work (*A.P.* 306) to that used in his introduction to the first book of *Epistles* (*Ep.* I. 1. 10), it has been maintained that the *Ars Poetica* is of the same date as the first book of *Epistles*. But the language if similar is not identical: In the *Epistles* Horace says he is laying aside poetry for philosophy; in the *Ars Poetica* he says that, no longer writing

\* S II i 28.

† *Epp.* I i 10.

himself, he will teach the younger generation how to write. It is likely that the *Ars Poetica* belongs to the latest period of Horace's production, although one of the considerations which have been thought to make for this view, namely, that it is an unfinished poem, is untenable.

The first and the later in date of the two letters which the second book of *Epistles* contains was addressed, like the last book of *Odes*, to Augustus, who had complained of the absence of reference to himself in the poet's literary writings. During this final period (20-8 B.C.) Horace stood in closer relation to the Court than before. Indeed, Augustus had expressed a wish that Horace should quit his position as Mæcenas' dependent and become his own private secretary. This offer Horace refused, and his friendship with his patron seems to have remained unimpaired till the death of the latter, followed a few months later by that of Horace himself (B.C. 8).

Such is a sketch of Horace's life in relation to his works. In them he appears successively as satirist, lyricist, moralist, and literary critic.

In satire, as has been observed above, Horace took Lucilius as his model. But in his hands it underwent some modifications in character and in form, due partly to his circumstances, partly to his temperament, partly to the development of his artistic skill. The freedman's son, member of a vanquished party, with his way to make, could not emulate the freedom of the knight, the intimate friend of the most prominent men in the State. Satire, then, as written by Horace, ceased to be political, and was restricted to social criticism. Even in this limited field he was less aggressive and more circumspect than his predecessor. True, in one of his earliest satires (l. 11.) he had attacked individuals, in some cases by name.

But his freedom had been resented, and the satire next in date (I. iv.) shows him on his defence, seeking to disarm criticism by assurances that his literary ambitions are modest, that he has no desire to give pain, and that none but the guilty need fear his attacks. In effect his satire became in the sequel less personal and more abstract. Significant in this connection is the nomenclature of the satires. Lucilius had satirised his contemporaries by name, and in the first and to a less extent in the second of Horace's satires the names were those of persons living at the time. But on the whole the names of the persons satirised by Horace are either those of Lucilian characters or contemporaries of Cicero, or else they are names formed to indicate some characteristic, or disguised by some modification of the initial syllable. If the disguise was transparent enough it was at any rate a concession to usage, and it would seem that in some cases even the persons indicated under these disguises were no longer living. Of Horace's actual contemporaries only one or two insignificant and unpopular persons were referred to by their own names.

As with the spirit and scope of satire so with its content and form, Horace basing himself on Lucilius made some advance upon his master. Lucilius had given satire its censorious tone; but there was also much in his satires of miscellaneous content and without ethical bearing. Similarly Horace's earliest satire (I. vii.), an account of a lawsuit like one by Lucilius, and his narrative of a journey to Brundisium (I. v.), after Lucilius' journey to Messana, had been written rather to entertain than to instruct. The sketch (I. ix.) of how Horace in the course of a morning stroll was entangled in an interview with a pushing person who sought an introduction to

Mæcenas and how he escaped more by luck than judgment; the description of the incantations of Canidia and her associates on the Esquiline (I. viii.); can hardly be said to have a moral, though the first indicates the difference between self-assertion and self-respect, and the second pours ridicule on proceedings of which the seventeenth epode had emphasized the horror. Again, in the three apologetic satires of the first book in which Horace defends his use of satire (I. iv.), disarms the envy felt against him as the protégé of Mæcenas (I. vi.), or maintains (I. x.) the criticism he had had occasion to make on Lucilius in the first of the three, he was following Lucilius' lead, for Lucilius had written an apology for satire, had given details about his own life and education, and had used satire as a medium for literary criticism. But in the disquisitions on the universality of discontent (I. i.), the latest of the satires of the first book, and the need for charity in judging one's friends (I. iii.), Horace was writing something more like satire in the modern acceptance of the term. In construction the moral essays of the first book have a looseness which it is perhaps not fanciful to connect with the origin of satire in the plotless dramatic *satura*. Horace shows a tendency to run on with the patter of a public entertainer without a very definite idea as to where he is going.\* The first satire develops two subjects, the universality of discontent, and the prevalence of the error which takes money to be an end instead of a means. The author achieves a kind of artificial unity by recurring at the end of the satire to a question which he had raised at the beginning; but he nowhere states definitely what he vaguely feels, that the two phenomena are related as effect and cause. In the following satire, having reached the

\* *Sat.* I. i. 24; I. ii. 23

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principle that fools know no mean, he applies it only with reference to amours, and in a very desultory fashion even to these.

But the second book marks a distinct advance. In the opening satire, which serves as an introduction to the book, he represents himself as consulting the lawyer Trebatius with reference to two criticisms which had been made upon his satire, the one that it was too bitter, the other that it was too desultory. In effect he meets both criticisms in this book by adopting almost exclusively the form of dialogue. Thereby he provides his satires with a more compact construction and reduces the risk of giving offence by not speaking in his own person. In one satire, the fifth, he does not appear at all. Ulysses returning penniless from his wanderings, inquires of the seer Tiresias how he is to repair the depredations of the suitors. Tiresias advises him to imitate the methods of the Roman will-hunters of the day, describing them with a contemptuous particularity which makes this dialogue more truly a satire in the modern sense than any other of Horace's writings. In four other dialogues Horace does indeed take a part, but it is quite a subordinate one. Thus he only elicits (II. viii.) Fundanius' narrative of the snob's entertainment by inquiring how he had enjoyed his dinner with the wealthy Nasidienus. It is Catus, whose name conceals that of Cicero's Epicurean correspondent Matius, who retails (II. iv.) with infinite seriousness the precepts of an unnamed master of the art of good living. His listener does but appraise these at their true value when he professes an obviously amused eagerness to see the great man in person, and ironically characterises his recipes "as rules for a happy life." The contrasted disquisition (II. ii.) on the advantages of frugality Horace

announces as the discourse of the shrewd old farmer Ofellus, perhaps a neighbour of his in the old days when he lived in Apulia. Only in the sixth satire does Horace speak in his own person, and this, like the sixth of the first book, is not so much satiric as autobiographical and apologetic. He contrasts his life in town, taking occasion to indicate the terms on which he had lived with Mæcenas during the last eight years with his life in the country; and, again reverting to the dramatic method, supports his preference for the latter by the fable of the town and the country mouse, which is told as an after-dinner anecdote by an old guest at his Sabine villa. The whole satire has the tranquil geniality which, as will be seen later, is the note of the *Epistles*. Indeed throughout the second book Horace is much less acrimonious than in the first. He had met the charge that his satire was too bitter by a change of tone as well as of method. His growing tolerance is exemplified in his change of attitude towards the Stoic philosophy. In the third satire of his first book he had ridiculed the Stoic paradox about the equality of offences, regarding it as opposed to common sense and fatal to friendship; but in the dialogue with Damasippus (II. iii.), and that with his slave Davus (II. vii.), he makes two other Stoic paradoxes, those, which respectively restrict sanity and freedom to the ideal wise man of the Stoics, the basis of his argument. That he does not mean them to be taken in too serious a spirit is indicated by the fact that he puts them in the mouths of a bankrupt spendthrift and a slave who modestly describes himself as "not too good for this world." Both, however, are made to speak very good sense; and both, though Damasippus deals in the main with fools at large, aim some shrewd blows at the poet

himself. With both he loses patience in the most natural manner in the world, when their criticism becomes a little too personal. When Damasippus, in his enumeration of the poet's failings, adds to a weakness for bricks and mortar and a tendency to live above his means an unkind reference to "love affairs past counting," Horace exclaims in ironical despair,

*O greater, spare the lesser—lunatic !*

while Davus, who has dealt with his master's weaknesses faithfully and with increasing frankness, is eventually threatened with personal violence or relegation to field labour.

That Horace imitated Lucilius has been mentioned already. But possibly his satires stood in a still closer relation to those of his predecessor than has yet been indicated. It has been argued\* that Horace "did for Lucilius very much what Pope did for the coarse tales of Chaucer"; in other words, that his satires are refined versions of Lucilian originals, and that consequently they do not to anything like the extent which has been supposed contain a record of his personal experiences. To take one instance. In the account of Horace's journey to Brundisium there are a certain number of occurrences and particulars to which close parallels may be found in the scanty fragments of Lucilius' journey to Messina. There can be little doubt that the earlier poem suggested to Horace the idea of writing a similar versified itinerary, and it is difficult to resist the conviction that into this he introduced some incidents which he found in his model, but which can hardly also have happened to himself. But he may well have thought it indiscreet to give a record

\* By Prof. Tyrrell, *Lectures on Latin Poetry*, pp 166-181.



of words actually spoken or, without selection, of incidents that actually occurred. The occasion was an important one, and it belonged to a very early stage in his friendship with Mæcenas. Indeed, Horace constantly refrained from making copy, at least in the sense of gratifying curiosity, out of his relations with the great. It is worth noticing that the only remarks he ever put into the mouth of Mæcenas are "What is the time?" and "Who is to fight at the next show?" In these circumstances it is not surprising that he fell back for details upon the literary record of a similar journey, although he was none the less giving in the main what he appears to be giving—a lively recollection of a journey which he actually made. The journey to Brundisium stands, in fact, on rather a different footing from the other satires, and it is precisely this satire which offers the clearest indications of indebtedness to a Lucilian original.

For instance, the reasoning that Horace's adventure in the Sacred Way (S. I. ix.) is a version of a satire by Lucilius because it begins with "By chance I was going," describes how Horace was addressed by a stranger as "my dear fellow," and ends with "thus did Apollo save me," while among the fragments of Lucilius are found the words "By chance a ram was going," a description of a person of osculatory habits, and the line

*"It is one thing to say 'he escaped' and another 'Apollo preserved him,'"*

is by no means so convincing. Horace was saturated with Lucilius. He constantly uses expressions, and occasionally arguments and illustrations, which Lucilius had employed before him, though consistently with his strictures on Lucilius he almost always improves them, and improves them greatly, by the avoidance of harsh-

ness, diffuseness, and the use of Greek words. Further, it may be conceded that other poems besides the journey to Brundisium (I. v.), for instance the dinner of Nasidienus (II. viii.), and perhaps the letter to his bailiff (*Ep.* i. 14), were suggested by similar poems by Lucilius. But language which implies that Horace's satires generally are versions of satires by Lucilius implies what is certainly not true of some of them (*e.g.*, that describing the incantations of Canidia, S. I. viii.). Again, if Horace would not have made the lawsuit of Persius and Rupilius Rex (S. I. vii.) the subject of a satire, had Lucilius not written one on the trial of Mucius Scaevola, the matter of Horace's satire is none the less entirely original. And the fact that the example of Lucilius suggested to Horace the use of satire as a medium for self-revelation and literary criticism does not prove that the considerable quantity of autobiographical and polemical matter in Horace's satires (I. iv. 6, 10, and II. 16) is not a veritable record of facts and a genuine exposition of his literary attitude. Horace's satires have abundance of actuality, and it is worthy of note that his detractors fell foul of him, not for plagiarizing Lucilius, but for criticising him, and this though the critics were busy enough with the "thefts" of Virgil.

Satiric in character but lyrical in form, the *Epodes* mark the transition from the *Satires* to the *Odes*. The name has reference to the prevailing metres,\* in which a longer is followed by a shorter line, which, as is implied in its name (*ἐπὶ ὁδῶς*), is, so to speak, its echo.

\* In 1-10 an iambic trimeter is followed by an iambic dimeter. In 13-16 a hexameter is similarly followed. In 11, in which an iambic dimeter is succeeded by a line in which the elegiac and iambic metres are combined, the principle that the second line of the couplet should be the shorter is abandoned. In 17 the lines (iambic trimeters) are not in couplets and are of equal length.

Horace himself, however, called these poems iambics. The word connoted invective, for this was the earliest use to which this metre had been put, notably by Archilochus, whose style and metre Horace claims to have been the first to introduce at Rome. Lampoons some of the epodes are, such as the attack on the upstart freedman (iv.), or the craven backbiter (vi.), or that inverted *prophemticon* (x.) which ends with the hope that the poetaster Mævius, disliked of Virgil, might feed the gulls. The two poems concerned with the sorceress Canidia, the first (v.) exhibiting her at her hellish work, the second (xvii.) under the guise of a recantation repeating and supplementing the charges previously made, present a curious combination of humour and horror. The denunciation of garlic (iii.) is a burlesque and not serious, while the praise of a country life (ii.) may be serious or not. After a detailed picture, which it is hard to believe is not drawn *con amore*, of the delights of the country, Horace surprises us by the disclosure that the speaker is a moneylender with whom a fortnight's experience of the reality is enough to make him revert to his former calling. To deprecate seriousness after a momentary display of feeling is quite in Horace's later manner; but this *volte-face*, to which the closest parallel may be found in the unexpected close of one or two of Calverley's poems in *Fly Leaves*, is something far more decisive. It has been conjectured that Horace intended to cast ridicule on affected eulogiums of the country which Virgil's *Eclogues* may have made the fashion. Two epodes (vii. and xvi.) express horror and despondency at the prospect of the renewal of civil war. Two (i. and ix.) are concerned with the battle of Actium. In two (xi. and xiii.) the tone is much the same as that of some of the earliest odes.

The *Epodes* give the impression of being experimental work. Horace had not yet found himself. The bitterness which some of them exhibited was not really characteristic of him. From the coarseness of others the more refined taste of his later days would have recoiled. They show a diffuseness and a superabundance of epithets, particularly in the idyllic picture of country life (ii) and the description of Atlantis (xvi), in marked contrast to the terseness which Horace achieved in the *Odes*. Yet with the defects the *Epodes* have some of the qualities of youth. It would be hard to match in Horace's later writing the *élan* of

*Then to the fields, the happy fields, the golden isles away!*

xvi 41

In the ebullition in his confession of love :

*Shame that a poor man's gifted mind  
'Gainst wealth should nought avail!*

xi 11.

there is the poignancy of personal feeling, and in the description of his meeting with Neæra (xv. 5), "clinging close as ivy"—the opening lines are as melodious as anything he ever wrote—something more like genuine passion than can be discovered in the very level-headed love poems of his later years.

But on the whole the *Epodes* are of rude workmanship as compared with the *Odes*. It is the *Odes*, a hundred and three poems varying in length from eight to eighty lines, in the lyric metres used by Alcæus and Sappho, Archilochus and Anacreon, which exhibit Horace's most finished art. They include occasional poems, conveying invitations, or bidding welcome to returning, farewell to departing friends ; short pieces containing reflections suggested by the season or by some aspect of Nature ;

poems expressive of the author's own literary self-consciousness, or dealing with incidents in his life; moral epistles addressed to friends or distinguished acquaintances; light lyrics on love; graver odes on subjects of national importance; and hymns to gods. To the last category belongs the hymn to Apollo and Diana (*Carmen Sæculare*) composed for the secular games in 17 B.C., which is not included in the four books of *Odes*.

The variety of the subjects is enhanced by the principle of arrangement, which is broadly that of the alternation of the grave with the gay. This principle excludes strict chronological order, but it is not incompatible with a certain attention to it. The first three books dedicated to Mæcenas were, as has been seen, published earlier than the fourth book, dedicated to Augustus. And although the first three books were published simultaneously, as far as can be ascertained the earlier odes predominate in the earlier, the later in the later of these books. The odes which deal with national affairs correspond in their order with the sequence of historical events. The odes expressive of Horace's own literary self-consciousness, as a rule the initial and final odes of each book, exhibit a growing confidence in his position as a lyric poet. Thus in Book I. in the opening ode it is to the countenance of Mæcenas that Horace looks to assure him a place among lyric bards,\* and the *Envoi* (*Persicos odi, puer apparatus*) suggests the modesty of his aspirations. In the following book (II.) the opening ode (*Motum ex Metello consule civicum*) with its recollections of the civil wars strikes

\* *Quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseris,  
Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.*

a graver note, and the book ends with an ode, clearly reminiscent of Ennius' boast of immortality,\* in which he describes his own metamorphosis into a swan (II. xx). At the opening of the third book Horace announces himself as priest of the Muses (III. i. 3), and in the final ode he declares that he has raised a monument more enduring than brass (III. xxx. 1). When we come to the fourth book Horace speaks as one whose position is assured. He has a place (IV. ix. 6) beside Pindar and Simonides, Alcæus, Stesichorus and Anacreon. It is not Mæcenas but the Roman nation which deigns to set him among the lovely companies of the bards (IV. iii. 13). He is pointed out as the minstrel of the Roman lyre (*ibid* l. 22)

With this growing confidence in his inspiration are associated increasing seriousness and exaltation of tone. In the first book poems of love and wine predominate. A feature of the second book are the odes which resemble moral epistles; those to Sallustius Crispus, on the right use of wealth (ii); to Dellius, on equanimity (iii.); to Licinius Murræna, on moderation (ix); to Postumus, on the flight of time (xiv.); to Grosphus, on the avoidance of restlessness (xvi). The third book opens with a series of six *Alcæic* odes, at once ethical and patriotic.

In the fourth book the centre of gravity is in the odes which celebrate the victories won by the young princes of the imperial house (iv. xiv.) and eulogise the tranquillity (v.) and the great achievements (xv.) of the Augustan reign.

The *Odes*, then, are something more than a lyrical miscellany. And assuredly they are more than mere

\* *Nemo me lacrimis decoret nec funera fletu*  
*Faxit cur? voluto viru' per ora virum.*

exercises in metre. The opinion that they are to be so regarded is based on the consideration of certain passages which, metrically perfect, are open to criticism as being in doubtful taste, or as failing to express the meaning which they seem intended to convey. Horace certainly laid special stress on his achievement in having naturalised the Greek lyric metres. The circumstance that the first nine odes are all in different metres, and include examples of nearly every lyric metre attempted by Horace, indicate that they constitute a prospectus as well as an experiment. Yet the obvious fact that the odes do as a whole contain the expression of Horace's philosophical convictions and patriotic aspirations contradicts the inference, drawn from a few passages in which he seems to have made some sacrifice of meaning to the exigencies of difficult metres, that the odes are no more than metrical exercises.

Equally untenable is the opinion that they have an esoteric significance. It has been maintained\* that like the poems of *In Memoriam* the odes of the first three books centre round a single event, and constitute a "lyrical tragedy" on the fall of Mæcenas consequent on the detection of the conspiracy of Muræna. No doubt the odes addressed to contemporaries were, like Horace's *Epistles*, written with an appositeness to their special circumstances which we are now unable fully to appreciate. The exhortation to moderation made to Muræna may well have had reference to defects of character which subsequently led him into an ambitious plot. But the balance of probability is in favour of the view that the first three books appeared before the autumn of 23 B.C., while Muræna's conspiracy was not detected till the following year. And apart from chronological difficulties,

\* By E. R. Garnsey, *Odes of Horace*, I-111.

a theory which envisages Horace not as a genial critic of life, but as a dealer in envenomed jests, which holds that he has woven a web of discreetly veiled allusion through the fabric of his lyrics, and that Xanthias Phoceus, Grosphus,\* Hebrus of Lipara, and the rest are none other than Muræna himself, while in Leuconoe, Neobule, and the "arrogant Chloe" he refers to Augustus' daughter Julia, an alliance with whom was part of Muræna's schemes, is more ingenious than plausible.

The *Odes* reflect the impressions made on Horace by various aspects of his life modified by the exigencies of literary form and tradition, and heightened by the idealism and the emotion which constitute the main difference between poetry and prose. The strongest of these impressions was that made by public affairs, and the nucleus of the four books is to be found in the national odes round which the others are grouped by way of giving variety and relief. It is this serious aspect of his lyric verse which Horace emphasises when he represents himself as especially under the protection of Melpomene the tragic Muse (*e.g.* I. xxx. 16). From forebodings of the outbreak of civil war between Octavian and Antony (I. xiv) we pass to exaltation at the overthrow of Cleopatra (I. xxxvii.) and prayers, like those at the close of Virgil's first Georgic, that Octavian may be spared to be the saviour of the Roman State (I. ii.). Concern for the national welfare betrays itself (II. xv.) in complaints about the growth of luxury. Each of the six Alcaic odes at the opening of the third book (III i.-vi.) deals with one of the virtues required in the citizens of the regenerated State—moderation, courage, justice, prudence, patriotism, and

\* Surely the name belongs to the Grosphus of *Ep.* I. xii. 22, who is certainly not Muræna.



piety. The note of misgiving sounded in the last of the series is struck again (III. xxiv.) in an appeal to Augustus to undertake the reformation of the public morals. In the fourth book we are in a rather different atmosphere. With their eulogies on the Claudian house (IV. iv. 37 and 73) and the warlike achievements of Augustus (IV. xiv. 38), the elaborately finished odes on the victories of Drusus and Tiberius are more definitely dynastic in tone than the patriotic poems of the earlier books. In the pendants with which, as though to place the victories of the young princes in their true relation to the directing care of the ruler, each of these odes is followed, Horace celebrates the tranquillity (IV v) and the peaceful achievements (IV. xv.) of the Augustan Age with something of courtly fervour and something of official optimism. Yet there is no need to question his sincerity. Horace's orderly temperament recoiled from anarchy, and was proportionately inclined to welcome the restraints, the revivals, and the compromises of Augustan rule. Indeed, he saw in these the best hope of realising those patriotic aspirations which he certainly entertained. From some of the *Alcaic* odes of Horace another lover of order, Tennyson, has caught the very movement and ethos of such poems as "Love thou the land," or "Of old sat Freedom on the heights." In the comparison of Rome hard beset by Hannibal (IV. iv. 57), with a holm-oak on Algidus drawing fresh vigour from the axe which lopped it—a comparison brilliantly applied by Pitt to England in the crisis of the Napoleonic struggle—there is the genuine ring of pride in great memories. The firmly checked pathos, the subdued enthusiasm, and the unconcerned serenity of its closing cadence make Horace's picture of Regulus returning to Carthage and certain death the finest ex-

pression of the Roman ideal of unshakable adherence to duty.

*So like a man outcasted—runs  
The tale—he thrust away from him  
His loving wife and little sons,  
And bent on earth his visage grim*

*Till with such words as none e'er spoke  
He braced the Senate's doubts at last,  
Then from his grieving friends he broke  
And to immortal exile passed.*

*Aye, knowing well the savage rack  
Would wreak its wrath on every limb,  
He parted kin who held him back  
And citizens who wrought with him,*

*Unmoved, as if, the lawsuits tried,  
Of clients weary business free,  
To the Venafran fields he hied,  
Or Greek Tarentum by the sea \**

III v 42 ff

Nor was Horace insensible to the greatness of Rome's imperial mission. Juno's prophecy of her future has something of the impressiveness of Virgil :

*Her name shall fling its terror wide  
Where Africa mid-seas divide  
From Europe, and where Nilus' tide  
Upswells, and floods the plain.*

III iii 45.

But for the treatment of graver subjects Horace declares his muse unfit (II. ii 37 ; III. iii. 69), and misled by his irony some have thought that it is the lighter pieces, those that deal with wine and love, that are the most characteristic, as they are most probably the most popular of his odes. Conviviality is certainly a prominent motive in the odes, and Horace implies, what

\* Horace, *Odes*, trans. by W. Marris.

indeed it would be rash to deny, that drinking is never out of season. The milder breath of spring (IV. xii.), the heat of summer (III. xxix.), autumn storms (III. xvii.), and winter snows (I. ix.), are alike appealed to as justifying potations. Yet in fairness to Horace it must be said that he is in favour of moderation. Revels are for special occasions, elections (III. xix. 10) or the homecoming of friends (II. vii. 25), and even revels are not to end in lawless wranglings (I. xvii. 9). Apart from this the praise of wine is a literary tradition, as Horace himself points out in the epistle in which he complains that his utterances on this topic have received a literal interpretation, and that the minor poets have taken to drink (*Ep.* I. 1. 19)

Horace was not a love-poet at all in the sense in which the word is applicable to Catullus and Propertius, who wrote of real persons and wrote with emotion. To assume that the Pyrrhas and Lydias, the Lalages and Glyceras of Horace had an objective existence, and actually to construct a chronological sequence of the poet's charmers, is to ignore the fact that these certainly imaginary names are not even consistently associated with distinctive characteristics. As well might inferences be drawn from the poems of Tennyson as to the poet's relations with Lilian, Mariana, and Lady Clara Vere de Vere. In this case speculation might be checked by reference to biographical record. Something analogous is possible with Horace. Of all the female characters of the *Odes*, only one, Cinara, is also mentioned in the *Epistles* (I. xiv. 33). She is there alluded to in language which, while not inconsistent with that of the *Odes*, differs from it with just such a difference as might be found between a poetical and a prosaic presentation of experience. It is possible, then, that while the others

had only a poetical, Cinara had an actual existence. And yet it may well be that even in Cinara Horace is only referring to a character of his own creation.

No one, then, need grieve for Lyce when Horace declares (c. IV. xiii.) that his prayers are answered and she has grown old and hideous. Cruel the verses are, and more telling than the coarser taunts of an earlier ode (I. xxv) for the touch of pathos not untinged with mockery:

*Where is the charm, the hue, the grace  
Of movement? What hast thou to-day  
Of that adored, whose breath was love,  
Who stole me from myself away?*

Lyce punished (IV. xiii.) is but a pendant to Lyce proud (III. x), and the latter no more than a lyrical version of a traditional form, a doorstep lament (*παρακλαυσίθυρον*)

Apart from this, love is a waning as patriotism is a waxing motive in the *Odes*. At the time when the first three books were published Horace was forty-two, and he writes as a man of middle age. Early in the first book he declares that he thought he had done with love\*. Later he protests that no jealous lover need fear his rivalry.† At the close of the third book he represents himself as finally retiring from the service of Venus.‡ His declaration at the opening of the fourth book, that the goddess is renewing her hostilities,§ is but a figurative way of saying that he is once more (much against the grain) about to write lyrics. There is then a retrospective character¶ about his erotic odes, and in the majority of them he writes not as actor but as onlooker. Heart-whole himself he asks Pyrrha whom she is charming now

\* c. I. xix. 4.    † c. II. iv. 22.    ‡ c. III. xxvi.    § c. IV. i. 1

¶ Perhaps the phrase implies too much. It has been suspected that many are imitations of Greek originals.

(I. v.), begs Lydia not to be the undoing of Sybaris (I. v.), rallies Xanthias on his love for a slave (II. iv.), consoles and warns Asterie in the absence of Gyges (III. vii.), and congratulates Neobule on her passion for Hebrus (III. xii.). Even in the odes in which Horace might be supposed to be speaking for himself, if we put aside a sufficiently vivid description of the pangs of jealousy (I. xiii.), he is as he describes himself :

*Fancy-free, or on a day  
Fired with love, I'm ever gay.*  
I. vi 20.

Playfully he assures Chloe (I. xxiii.) that he is neither tiger nor Gætulian lion ; while the lively sallies in which he protests that Barine, to judge by her appearance, thrives on perjury, are the merest persiflage. The flawless dramatic dialogue (III. ix.), which in the space of a couple of dozen lines presents three stages of a lovers' quarrel—reproach, protests that cover relenting, and final reconciliation—is but a comedy in miniature. Only Horace's surpassing grace—and what can be more graceful than such an address as “daughter fairer than mother fair” (I. xvi)—could win him, in days when passion and gallantry were confused, the reputation of a poet of love.

To friendship he gives sincerer expression. If he has not the whole-hearted delight of Catullus in his comrades, he can revive the memories of old campaigning days with Pompeius and exclaim :

*My friend is home again, and I  
Joy to go mad with revelry.*

II vii 27

He can count on Septimius to journey with him to the world's end, and, looking forward, ask him with a touch of sentiment to shed a tear on the warm ashes of his poet

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friend (II. vi. 23 ). Feelingly does he condole with Virgil on the loss of their common friend, Quintilius Varus,

*Over much or over long  
Who so dear a friend could mourn ?*

I xxiv 1

while Virgil himself he addresses in more passionate accents as "half of my soul" (I. iii. 8.). But it is for Mæcenas that his warmest feelings, his most exalted devotion, are reserved .

*Lo ! I have sworn, and have not lied.  
Onward, whenever thou shalt lead,  
Onward we'll go, prepared to tread  
The final journey side by side \**

II xvii. 9.

To characterise Horace as the poet of the town is to judge him by the *Satires* and to ignore the *Odes* and, one must add, the *Epistles*. If he had not the rapt and mystic delight in nature of Virgil, a score of charming vignettes—Soracte deep in glistening snow, oak woods of Garganus straining beneath north winds, Bandusia's chattering waters leaping from the shaded cavern—prove that he marked her external aspects with a pleased and appreciative eye. But his love for nature was local rather than universal. It is familiar places that he loved and sang best.

*Me neither hardihood's nurse Lacedæmon,  
No, nor Larissa's plain fecund, ever thrilled with a rapture  
Such as Albunea's echoing temple,  
Headlong Anio's fall, and Tiburnus' grove, and the orchards  
Moist with the flow of their rills ever-shifting.*

I vii. 10.

A common feature of the *Odes* is a reflective view which

\* Trans by W Marris, slightly altered

redeems the lightest of them from triviality. The most pervasive thoughts are those of shortness of life, the fickleness of Fortune, and the certainty of death. As a rule, the remedies suggested are of the Epicurean brand—enjoy the present; don't worry; ensure contentment by limiting wants. Perhaps the most characteristic expression of this side of his teaching is contained in the stanza:

*Relish each hour, and never care  
What lies beyond with gentle jest  
Mellow the bitter things; for ne'er  
Was mortal wholly blest*<sup>\*</sup>

II. xvi 25.

But there is a Stoic as well as an Epicurean element in the philosophy of Horace. Not assumed, but inherited by the poet from his Sabine ancestors, it emerges in his national odes, in which the Epicurean tendency to shun public duties would have been out of place. Both ideals are combined in the following: †

*Ill dost thou do to call him blest  
The lord of wealth, that name is given  
Of right to him who knoweth best  
To use the kindly gifts of heaven,  
And bear adversity's hard hand,  
Who dreads dishonour worse than death,  
Aye, and for friends and fatherland  
Stands forth to shed his dying breath.*

IV ix 45 \*

Of the literary epistle Horace may be regarded as the creator. True, Spurius Mummius had sent home letters from Corinth in witty verses, ‡ and Catullus had written two elegies in epistolary form (55 and 68 A.). But Mummius'

\* *Odes*, trans. by W. Marris

† Sellars, *the Roman poets of the Augustan age*, p. 166

‡ Cic. *ad. Att.* XIII. vi 4.

letters were probably only clever improvisations, and Catullus' poems to Hortensius and to Manlius retain the character of elegies. Horace calls his *epistles*, as he calls his *Satires* "discourses" (*sermones*). To both alike he denied the title of poetry, which he reserved for his lyrical productions. But between the *Satires* and the *Epistles* there are points of difference, which are for the most part referable to the fact that they belong to distinct forms of literature. The representation of scenes and characters, the roughnesses, negligencies, and occasional vulgarities of the *Satires* are connected with their origin in a form of popular entertainment. The *Epistles* are smoother in flow, more literary in character, and are constructed with a neatness rarely attained in the *Satires*. Ostensibly addressed to individuals, they are more intimate in tone, though not more autobiographical in content. Their greater finish may be accounted for by the careful labour Horace had lavished on the *Odes* during the seven years preceding their composition, and their more reflective tone by the fact that they were later, and advancing years had brought to Horace the philosophic mind. They are didactic, sometimes even gnomic\* in character.

Only a few of the Horatian Epistles wear the appearance of being real letters—that, for instance, in which Horace asks Julius Florus how he is getting on in the suite of Tiberius (iii.), or that which conveys his own grumblings and a gentle warning to Celsus Albinovanus (viii.), also a member of Tiberius' suite; the letter of invitation to the lawyer Torquatus (v.), bidding him slip out by the back door, and elude the client who is waiting in the hall; a letter of introduction commending Septimius, with the most tactful of approaches, to the favour of Tiberius (ix.).

\* E.g. l. ii. 55-6 consists of a succession of aphorisms.



But the directions given to Vinius Asina (xiii), who is charged with the delivery of a work by Horace to Augustus, are obviously intended not for the bearer but the recipient. The letter ostensibly addressed by Horace to his bailiff (xiv), who would certainly not have understood it, is really, like that to Fuscus Aristius (x), and that excusing his absence to Mæcenas (vii.), an apology for preferring the country to the town. The question addressed to Bullatius, how he had enjoyed his eastern trip (I. ii. 1), and the references to the complaints of Iccius about his position as superintendent of Agrippa's estates in Sicily (I. xii. 3), are but pegs on which to hang exhortations to contentment. Two epistles (xvii. and xviii.) are essays on the art of associating with the great, and two (vi. and xvi) are disquisitions recommending Epicurean calm and Stoic indifference to an external reputation for happiness or virtue.

The ever-present humour of Horace flashes out from time to time in whimsical illustration, as where he tells the bearer of his scroll not to bestow it under his arm "like a rustic carrying a lamb" (*Ep.* I. xiii. 12), or declares that what he wants is solid food, not sweetmeats, "like the slave who ran away from service with the priest" (*Ep.* I. x. 10)

Humour edges his contempt for the will-hunters who

*Bait a widow trap with fruits and cakes  
And net old men to stock their private lakes,\**

and reinforces his exhortation to self-culture in

*Robbers get up by night men's throats to knife,  
And won't you rouse yourself to save your life?†*

\* *Ep.* I. i. 77 (Conington's trans.)

† *Ep.* I. ii. 32 (Conington, slightly altered).

Phrases like "strenuous idleness," \* aphorisms such as

*Their skies not minds they change who haste o'erseas †*

or

*Dame Nature pitch-forked out will e'er return ‡*

have passed (in the original Latin) into proverbs.

But specially characteristic of the *Epistles* are the maxims for the tranquillizing of life, like this :

*'Tis here that what you want you'll find,*

*Here at Ulubræ, given an even mind §*

In the second book of the *Epistles* and in the so-called "Art of Poetry," Horace's subject is not manners, but literature. In the second *Epistle*, the earlier in date of the two of which the book consists, he does not deal with this subject formally. Addressed to Julius Florus, one of the younger literary set, it is ostensibly a string of excuses for not sending his correspondent any verses. He has ceased to be a poet ; Rome is noisy, and full of log-rolling versifiers who disgust one with literature ; it is extremely difficult to write well, and he knows too much to enjoy the blissful delusion that he is writing well when he is writing badly ; lastly, it is time he concerned himself with philosophy rather than poetry. Incidentally, his remark that he no longer writes poetry because he is no longer under the necessity to do so, introduces an autobiographical reminiscence of the days when he was first driven to poetry by want, and his strictures on the lower literary standards which prevail suggest a contrasted picture of the severe self-criticism of the true artist.

\* *Strenua inertia*, *Ep* I. xi. 28

† *Ep* I xi 29.

‡ *Ep* I x 24.

§ *Ep* I xi 27, Ulubræ was the dullest of places.

The first Epistle, addressed to Augustus, is a vindication of the Augustan Age from the point of view of literature. Horace feels that contemporary authors are unfairly handicapped by the popular prejudice in favour of the old Latin writers. This feeling makes him a little less than fair to the latter. He summarises, but does not subscribe to the traditional verdicts with regard to the most prominent among them. He sketches the rise of active drama and its modification by Hellenic influences, giving faint praise to the tragedians and decided blame to Plautus, and dwells on the difficulties with which contemporary playwrights had to contend in the absorption of even the educated part of modern audiences in spectacular effects. As to non-dramatic writers, however, he declares that, rigidly exacting as was Augustus' standard, Virgil and Varius came up to it. If he does not class himself with these, it is because at the time of writing he is no longer a poet; but he glances at his own achievements in the fourth book of the *Odes* (*Ep.* II. 1 250).

The "Art of Poetry" was not the title given by Horace to the poem which stands last in his works, and it is not an appropriate one, for it leads the reader to expect something more systematic and more comprehensive than he finds. It is a letter to the Pisos, and it begins with some general rules for good writing (1-72). When Horace passes from these to the consideration of different branches of literature, the partiality of his treatment becomes apparent. He says hardly anything of lyric poetry, and not much about epic. He is chiefly concerned with the drama, and gives particular attention to the treatment and diction suitable for satiric plays.

He had already shown some preoccupation with the drama in his remarks on the decadence of the stage in the

letter to Augustus Pollio and Varius had attempted to revive it, and possibly Horace's set entertained the idea of extending this attempt to the satiric drama. He concludes the letter with some hints as to how to attain success as a playwright, and some warnings to intending authors especially addressed to the elder Piso.

An ancient commentator stated that Horace embodied in this poem the most important of the precepts of the Alexandrine writer Neoptolemus of Paros. It is true that the questions at issue are treated from the point of Roman writers, and the opinions expressed are in accordance with those expressed by Horace elsewhere. Further, in some points, such as the functions of the chorus, the restriction in the use of the *deus ex machina* and the characterisation of the several ages of man, Horace seems to follow Aristotle. Still it is possible that we have here a combination of Alexandrine rules with Horatian comment, while the Aristotelian teaching may have come to Horace through Neoptolemus. In any case the "Art of Poetry" has the aspect of a letter rather than that of a didactic poem, and the great influence it has exercised is in part connected with a misconception of its character. None the less the soundness of many of the opinions expressed in it—as that in poetry there is no room for mediocrity, or that the foundation of good writing is good sense, or that counsel of perfection that the completed work should be kept back nine years before publication—must in any case have won attention; while the vividness of many of its phrases, the "purple patch" (*purpureus pannus*), the "labour of the file" (*limæ labor*), "sesquipedalian words," or the plunge in *medias res*, have made them familiar not merely to the critic but to the man in the street.

In his judgments on literary works Horace was by no means infallible, but in the main purpose of his writings on literature, the insistence on a higher standard of finish than had yet been attained, he was at once consistent and correct. Greek models were to be studied incessantly, and studied with far closer attention than they had hitherto received. Horace's ideal poet (*Epp.* II. ii. 122) and his ideal critic (*A. P.* 445) are at one in waging war on weakness, roughness, and redundancy. In the matter of diction he insists on the duty of careful selection, the discreet revival of ancient and the adoption of modern words which had recently obtained currency, while he claims the right within due limits to originate. As with style and diction so with metre a higher standard is demanded. Plautine metre as well as Plautine construction and character drawing left much to be desired, and the tragedians of the future are urged to write verses more iambic in character than the spondaic lines which had too often done duty for iambs in Ennius and Accius.

The cause of Horace's popularity is to be found in the universality of his appeal, in the personal relation which he establishes between himself and the reader, and his art. No poet's poet, he addresses the average man. He deals in commonplaces. He is nowhere above the level of ordinary intelligence. Hence he is sure of an audience. And his hold of it is secure, for he possesses the difficult art of expressing commonplaces in a distinctive way. Indeed, he does more; to many of them he has given their final form. Horace is never tedious; he had a horror of being a bore. "Whatever rules you give," he says, "be short." Against the danger he apprehended he was secured by the possession of supreme social tact.

Thus he does not speak *ex cathedra*, nor claim to be infallible. If he instructs, it is as

*Your humble friend who needs instruction too*

I. xvii 3

It is thus that he closes a discourse :

*Farewell, if you can mend these precepts, do,  
If not, what serves for me may serve for you.*

*Ep. I. vi.*

But he is no ineffective satirist. No one has described his methods more exactly than his admirer and imitator Persius. "Horace, sly rogue, manages to probe his friend's every fault, while he makes him laugh ; admittance gained, he plays about the heartstrings." When he has conciliated his reader he gets home with such a thrust as "Change but the names, of you the tale is told." And he can be downright. There are things at which for all his tolerance he draws the line—miserliness, utter selfishness, above all treachery to a friend :

*He who maligns an absent friend's fair fame,  
Who says no word for him when others blame,  
Who courts a reckless laugh by random hits,  
Just for the sake of ranking with the wits,  
Who feigns what he ne'er saw, a secret blabs,  
Beware him, Roman—that man steals or stabs.*

S. I iv 85 (Conington's trans.)

And yet it would seem that it is Horace's art which is the supreme factor in his success. For while it is in his satires and epistles that he has most opportunities for confidential and tactful address, it is by his lyric poetry that he is more widely known. It is true that in his conversational use of the hexameter Horace is unrivalled, while, though a consummate metrist, he is not a supreme lyric poet. It is true, again, that in the satires and

epistles he gives us a more genuine presentation of himself than he does in the odes. The Horace who lies in bed till ten, who saunters in Circus or Forum of an evening, or rides to Tarentum on crop-tailed mule, is more true and more convincing than the "priest of the Muses," the "minstrel of the Roman lyre," or the marvellous child, the favourite of heaven, saved at Philippi by the intervention of Mercury, or rescued from a falling tree in his Sabine farm by the right hand of Faunus. But although in the odes Horace does assume something of a pose, in tact, in geniality, and in philosophy of life the Horace of the odes and of the "prosaic" poems is one and the same. And it is their greater art, the labour of the file expended upon them, their conciseness of expression, aided in a measure by the brevity of the poems themselves, which with the charm of the lyric metres has fixed the odes in men's minds to a degree not attained by satires or epistles.

It has been said with truth that of late years Virgil has increased and Horace decreased. With the first result there is no cause to quarrel. The study of Virgil in relation to his circumstances has led to a truer appreciation of the master spirit of the Augustan Age. Both as lyricist and as literary dictator the eighteenth century rated Horace too high. With his satisfaction in the friendship of the great, Horace, for all his grit, was after all but a big little man; the self-possession which he was careful to maintain is perhaps incompatible with the highest poetic achievement. But to some extent his decline is due to causes temporary and accidental. He is eminently quotable, and quotation is no longer in fashion. One may go to many a meeting of fox-hounds and never hear, as Whyte-Melville heard, elderly sportsmen "laugh

out an *Eheu fugaces!*" The vein of slightly bibulous sentimentalism, which Thackeray not so much reproduced as possessed, is out. The age is serious, and Fabian youths—like Clough's young men, themselves the product of a serious day, who "thought Horace and their uncles old fools"—are frankly scandalised by his interest in Italian wines and his indifference to social problems.

But perfect style is sure of immortality, and common sense at no time a drug in the market. If the criticism of life be one of the functions of poetry, the utterances of Horace, the most level-headed of divine bards, the most consistent advocate of self-culture before Goethe, may still serve to remedy the weaknesses from which humanity has not yet shaken itself free.



## XI

### THE AUGUSTAN AGE. ELEGY

"IN elegy," says Quintilian, "we challenge comparison with the Greeks." \* By "the Greeks" he means the Alexandrine elegists. For though the elegiac metre had been used for a variety of subjects ever since the seventh century before Christ, it was the Alexandrines who first applied it to the subjective treatment of love in poetry, which the Romans understood by elegy. It was they, it would seem, who produced collections of elegiac poems grouped round a central female figure, and made elegiac poetry the expression of their individual moods. Thus the name of Bittis is associated with Philetas, and that of Lyde with Antimachus, a poet resembling the Alexandrines in character though anticipating them in date, while of Callimachus Ovid says that he "confessed his raptures in verse" (*Tr.* ii. 367).

It is true that Mimnermus of Colophon had written of love in elegiacs far earlier than these. Indeed, Horace hints that Propertius, who refers to the poet of Colophon as "more potent in the sphere of love than Homer" would have preferred the title of the Roman Mimnermus even to that of the Roman Callimachus, which he actually claimed. But Mimnermus, known though he was as the lover of a woman called Nanno,

## ELEGY AT ITS ZENITH UNDER AUGUSTUS 309

dwells in his surviving fragments only in general terms on such subjects as the power of love, the bitterness of life, and the horror of death. In manner, as in date, so he belongs to the gnomic poets. Only for the motive with which Virgil claimed Hesiod as his master in pastoral didactic, the desire to exalt the branch of literature with which he was engaged by fathering it on a primitive exponent, could Propertius have claimed Mimnermus as the ancestor of Latin elegy.

It has been seen (pp. 138, 140) that in elegiac as in other kinds of poetry the Alexandrines had been followed by the Roman Alexandrines of the late Republic. But it is not of Cato or Varro or Tucidias, not of Calvus nor even of Catullus, that Quintilian is thinking in the passage quoted above. For Catullus the greatest of them was not primarily an elegiac poet, and he left the elegiac metre in a comparatively rude state. The successful rivals of the Greeks in elegy are the elegists of the Augustan Age, who not only naturalised but perfected the elegiac, as Virgil the heroic, and Horace the lyric metres of Hellas.

The loss of the Greek erotic elegists forbids us to test and yet hardly permits us to doubt the justice of Quintilian's claim. In the assured tranquillity of the Augustan Age the flower of love in idleness found its fairest opportunity to bloom. The social emancipation of women facilitated the inspiration of the elegists and assured them of an audience female as well as male. Propertius anticipates that his volumes will be "tossed on the sofas of the fair," and Ovid claims from maidens as well as youths the admission that "Naso was a master in the art of love." To the subject of their choice, unlike either the Alexandrines or their earlier Latin imitators, whose interests were divided between elegy and the little epic, the Augustan elegists devoted

their entire energies. Ovid alone, after he had exhausted a shallower stream of sentiment, was led by his more inventive fancy and to some extent by considerations of prudence into enterprises didactic and narrative.

For, indeed, the sentiment of love was eminently congenial to the Italian temperament. It is not a little remarkable how much of tenderness, how much of the seriousness of enduring attachment these men of pleasure, for such the Roman elegists were, have imported into their passion.\*

Of C. CORNELIUS GALLUS (69-26 B.C.) as an elegist no opinion can be formed. Like Catullus' contemporary Calvus, he comes to us empty-handed. Of the four books entitled *Lycoris*, inspired by Volumnia, the freedwoman of Volumnius Eutrapelus, an actress whose stage name was Cytheris, a solitary pentameter remains. As the earliest of the four Augustan elegists he may be allowed the credit of being the founder of the school. Yet if Quintilian is right in characterising him as "somewhat harsh" (*durior*) he must be considered to have been wanting in what was the special charm of Roman elegy.†

ALBIUS TIBULLUS (54-19 B.C.) was a man of Equestrian family and possessed of a small estate in Latium. Horace knew him and addressed to him an ode (c. I. xxxiii.) in which he consoles him for some miscarriage in his affairs of the heart by the reflection that in love perversity is the rule, and an epistle (*Epp.* I. iv.) in which he congratulates him on the possession of good looks, adequate means, and the art of enjoyment—all the requisites, in fact, for happiness. Tibullus died in the same year as Virgil, with whom he is associated in an epigram by Domitius

\* Plessis, *Poesie Latine*, p. 352.

† Sellar, *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age*, p. 223.

Marsus. But he was a member of the circle not of Mæcenas but of Messalla, a circle less intimately associated with the ideas of the government. With Messalla he went on a campaign in Aquitania about 30 B.C., and later started on a mission to the East, but proceeded no further than Corcyra, where he was detained by illness. The earliest elegy of his first book (I. x.), in which he expresses his abhorrence of war, shows him living at his home and contemplating with some disquietude the prospect of his first campaign. The last (I. vii) is a birthday poem to Messalla inspired by the Aquitanian triumph of his patron. Except for three referring to a boy called Marathus, the remaining elegies of the book, half the whole number, are concerned with his love for Delia, who represents, we are told, an original Plania. The five elegies of which she is the subject present the course of their love in a somewhat shadowy form. They show her as kind (I. i. 55); as faithless (I. v. 47) and preferring a wealthier lover; finally as married, though the bond may be of a less formal kind (I. ii. 41), yet maintaining relations with Tibullus, to his discomfort (I. vi. 8), though he still dreams of bliss beside her (I. vi. 85). Of Delia Tibullus draws more than one sympathetic picture; but the happiness he found with her was neither continuous nor prolonged. What Delia is in the first book Nemesis is in the second. She is the subject of three out of the six elegies it contains. But in Nemesis Tibullus can have found less happiness than in Delia. At once fickle (II. iii. 59) and tyrannical (II. iv. 1), she is withal rapacious. Indifferent to his poetry,

*With hollowed palm she ever asks for gold.*

But for Hope springing eternal, he would have ended his

troubles by death (II. iv. 14). The remaining three elegies are a description (II. i. 1) of the yearly purification of the fields on Tibullus' estate, a birthday address to Cornutus, a member of Messalla's circle, wishing him happiness in his wedded life (II. 11.), and a poem celebrating the appointment of Messalla's son as one of the keepers of the Sibylline books (II. v).

The two remaining books (for Book III. is generally divided into two) contain no poems of which it can be said with confidence that they are by Tibullus. What is certain is that, though they are the work of at least four hands, they all emanate from the circle of Messalla. The third book is signed by Lygdamus (III. 11. 29), and tells of his love for Næra and his hopes, ultimately blighted, of marriage with her. If Lygdamus is a real name it must be that of a slave or freedman, and it may be noted that Propertius had a slave so called. But the circumstances of the writer seem to exclude this supposition, and it has been conjectured that Lygdamus is a *nom-de-plume*, and represents Albius.\* But if so this Albius is not the Tibullus who wrote the first two books, though, as far as resemblance goes, he might have been his brother. For while the author of the third book has reminiscences of Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid (who in his turn borrowed from him the line in which he dated his own birth), it is above all on Tibullus that he is modelled. On the other hand he shows a tendency towards realism (*cf.* III. i. 9; III. 11. 14) absent from Tibullus, and, despite a certain *naïveté* and frankness, is only a very mediocre poet.

Considerably beneath mediocrity is the digressive and sycophantic eulogy of Messalla in hexameters with

\* The conjecture is suggested by the connection in meaning between *albus* = white and *λευδός* = white marble.

which the fourth book opens. After this we are in a different atmosphere. The suite of six little poems (amounting to forty lines in all) by Messalla's niece Sulpicia, dealing with her love for Cerinthus, probably to be identified with the Cornutus (II. 11.) whom she eventually married, is unique in Latin literature. Without much facility of expression and quite unambitious of adornment, they are expressive of a distinct individuality. In them we see the petulance of the favourite niece thwarted in her desire to meet her lover (VIII.); the dignity of the noble Roman lady, who, suspecting her lover of an unworthy intrigue, bids him, if he will, prefer a low-born wench to Sulpicia, daughter of Servius (x), the pathos with which, stricken with illness, she declares that she has no wish for recovery unless Cerinthus too desires it (xi), and finally\* (vii.) the passionate pride with which she exults in the consummation of her love, which she protests she would be more ashamed to conceal than to avow. The five elegies which precede, the work of a far more practised hand than Sulpicia's, embroider and comment on the episode in which she plays the leading part. The writer is a sympathetic onlooker belonging to the immediate circle of Messalla, and may possibly be Tibullus himself. The two brief companion poems with which the book closes are claimed as his by the writer (xiii. 13), but not conclusively, for it is not elsewhere Tibullus' practice to mention his own name,† and chronology is against the supposition that these are the "woeful elegies" and the lady of which they are the subject "the mistress bitter-sweet" (*immitis Glyceræ*) with respect to whom Tibullus

\* If Neméthy is right in placing vii last in the sequence

† Postgate, *Journ of Phil.* ix. 280.

was rallied by Horace.\* Yet so far as skill and sentiment are concerned, the couplet

*Repose from cares, and light in darkest night  
And company in deserts lone art thou.†*

might well have been penned by Tibullus.

It is, however, on the first two books that an estimate of Tibullus must be formed. Readers, if such there still be, of Lytton's romances may remember the passage in *My Novel* in which on the morrow of a debate the hard-worked politician takes down Tibullus from the shelf, and, after a hasty perusal, replaces the volume with the remark, "Yes, A was right, Tibullus is more refined than Ovid." It is a comment few will contest, though it does not carry us far. As regards the personality of the poet it is certainly true. The only self-effacing lover among the elegists, he is content that Delia should be all and he nothing in the house (I. v. 30), and tender fidelity breathes in the wish he expresses to her :

*Thee may I hold in death with failing hand*  
I. i. 60.

Delicate consideration is extended even to the unamiable Nemesis. In the midst of an appeal which he makes to her by the shade of her dead sister, he breaks off in fear lest he should revive her pain, and adds :

*Unworthy I to cost my love one tear.*  
II. vi. 42.

\* Hor. C. II, xxxiii.

† *Tu mihi curarum requies, tu nocte vel atra  
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis*

IV. xiii 11.

"Soft" is the epithet which best fits Tibullus. His chief aversions are war and mercenary love :

*Who was the man who first fell swords produced ?  
How hard, how steely hard a heart was his !*

I x. 1.

Such is his cry, and he is for ever regretting "the days of Saturn," which presented themselves to him as the golden age of true love and the ideal country life in which he found his chief delight. For, like Virgil, Tibullus loved the country, its pleasant sights, its ancient pieties. The absence of the first lends added horror to the realms of death :

*No autumn fields, no tended vines are there,  
But the foul ferryman, the hell-hound's bay,  
And a pale company with scorched hair  
And hollow eyes by glooming merces astray.*

I. x. 35.

Both are charmingly portrayed in his elegy on the "blessing of the fields" (*Ambarvalia*), which closes on that note of tranquil happiness which is heard throughout:

*Play on, night yokes her steeds, and golden red  
The stars her car attend in merry dance,  
Thereafter mute, with dusky wings outspread,  
Sleep, and dim wayward-footed dreams advance*

II. i. 87

Thus idyllic in tone, elegy with Tibullus derives but little inspiration from national feeling. If, celebrating the association of his patron's son with the august destinies of the city by his appointment as a keeper of the Sibylline books, he makes the Sibyl foretell the greatness of Rome, and sings in verse of more majestic movement how the Trojan hero

*Looked back on Ilum and his gods aflame \**

---

\* *Ilion ardentes respiceretque deos.*



In a moment he is dreaming of the pastoral aspect then presented by the site on which Æneas' descendants were to raise their walls, and to pastoral scenes he recurs again and yet again (ll. 55, 91) In the Tibullan phrase "brother of fluttering love" we hardly recognise the Æneas of Virgil.\*

Mythological allusion, which, as will be seen, plays so prominent a part in Propertian elegy, is but sparingly used by Tibullus; and rhetoric, which was Ovid's inspiration, he almost eschews. What he feels he expresses directly, and in language of limpid clearness. But in the construction of his poems he has not the same lucidity "An elegy of Tibullus," says a French historian of Latin literature, "is a succession of commonplaces arbitrarily stitched together."† But the poet does not lack his defenders. Elegy, argues one of the most eminent of living German scholars, is *par excellence* the poetry of moods, and the link which controls their sequence is one not of logic but of feeling. In a masterly analysis of the elegy in which Tibullus depicts his feelings when left alone and ill in Corcyra (I. iii.), Professor Leo shows how the poet's thoughts turn to home and his beloved, and how a succession of images, recollections, anticipations, chase one another across his mental retina like the phases of a dream which gather shape and fade and pass to make way for others obscurely suggested by themselves. Yet Tibullus, though he follows the guidance of his moods, does not suffer them to lead him at random. Despite the apparent want of connection there is arrangement, and skilful arrangement. The pictures of the golden age and of real life, of Elysium and of Hell, are contrasted with themselves and with each

\* Pichon, *Hist. de la Lit. Latine*, p. 385

† *Id.* p. 382

other. The gloom deepens to the poet's imagined death, the nadir of the piece (l. iii. 55), and then gradually lifts till the close, where the suddenness and the joy of home-coming form a pendant to the reluctance and the forebodings of departure. At the last he sees Delia chaste and faithful, sitting among her maidens, who have fallen asleep over their work, and cries :

*Then may I unannounced appear,  
Dropped from the skies in seeming,  
Then run to meet me, Delia dear,  
Bare footed, tresses streaming  
Come, radiant Dawn, and bring, I pray,  
On roseate steeds yon shining day.*

I iii 91.

The defence indicated is not equally applicable to all Tibullus' elegies. Unkind critics might stress the point that it is most relevant in the case of those in which the poet is sick or dreaming. It is certainly true that Tibullus' errant fancy is occasionally caught by an idea with which he plays till he has exhausted it, in a manner not conducive to the onward movement of the poem. This is the explanation of the prevalence of the one rhetorical device which he allows himself, the repetition (*anaphora*), sometimes excessive, of a word which strikes the keynote of a passage. It is not unconnected with a narrowness of outlook and a paucity of ideas which do not allow Tibullus altogether to avoid monotony. In his treatment of the elegiac metre Tibullus has made an immense advance on his predecessors in smoothness and finish. Though the occasional division of the fifth foot of the hexameter shows a certain carelessness, and the occasional use of trisyllabic words at the end of the pentameter belongs to a practice soon discarded by Roman elegy,

his couplets, self-contained, as is not always the case with those of Catullus, achieve a pleasing and equable rise and fall. With less of variety and sonority than those of Propertius, they are far removed from the "rocking-horse" monotony of the Ovidian distych. Quintilian pronounces Tibullus "the most chaste and elegant of the elegiac writers. But," he adds, "some prefer Propertius." Those who avow themselves of this number may find their justification in a deeper music and a wider range of inspiration.

SEXTUS PROPERTIUS, born about 50 B.C., was a native of Umbria. If the description of his birthplace\* given by himself would apply equally well to the town of Spello, the occurrence in it of the name *Asis*, probably indicating the spot on which *Assisium* stood, and the discovery at *Assisi*, in addition to other inscriptions referring to members of the Propertian family found in and near the town, of a memorial to one *Passennus Paullus*, who may be identified with a man of that name described by Pliny the younger (*Epp.* VI. xv. 1; IX. xxii. 1) as a descendant of the poet, seem conclusive in favour of *Assisi*. He belonged to a respectable provincial family, probably, though not certainly, of equestrian standing,† and possessed of property which, though reduced by the confiscations of 41 B.C., sufficed to provide him with the education which made him a learned poet. Early his own master—for he had lost his father when a child, and his mother, who had brought him up at Rome, soon after he had at sixteen assumed the garb of manhood—in preference to practising at the bar he began to write verses,

\* IV. 1. 125, and probably, as suggested by O. L. Richmond IV 1. 65.

† It is not proved by IV. 1. 131.

and soon found a source of inspiration. Lycinna, his earliest flame, was eclipsed by Cynthia, who reigned long in his affections. Her real name was Hostia, and she was probably granddaughter of Hostius, who, in the time of the Gracchi, wrote an epic on the Istrian war. If not, like Rose Ayimer, endowed with "every virtue, every grace," she possessed, in her lover's phrase, "Venus' charm and all Minerva's skill." Beautiful and witty, she could dance, sing, and write poetry. The first outcome of this attachment, a book of elegies published when the writer was little more than twenty, immediately made his reputation. Occupied almost entirely \* with his love for Cynthia, and concluding with a short, perhaps fragmentary, piece about his birthplace, it constitutes a whole by itself, and continued to be issued in a separate form (*Cynthia monobiblos*) † Later it was followed by three more books. For, like the Pleiads of which Ovid wrote,

*Seven they are often called, but six they are.*

the books of Propertius are four, though since Lachmann's days they have constantly been numbered five.

Lachmann divided the second book, which is disproportionately long; supporting by arguments long held conclusive a proceeding which has caused not a little confusion. The first book, which, as observed, is almost entirely concerned with Cynthia, reflects the earliest and the happiest phase of Propertius' love for her. In the second book she is equally the central figure, being the subject of thirty out of the thirty-four elegies of which it is composed. But Propertius' relations to her are no longer so happy as before. By violent transitions he

\* Exceptions are ix, xx. (Hylas), xxi.

† Martial, xiv. 189

passes from jealousy (ix.) to gratitude (xx.), from exultation (xv) to threats of suicide (xvii); and there are indications (xxii.-xxiv) that unhappiness drove him to random loves. In the third book only about half the elegies have Cynthia for their subject. Towards its close there are disquieting references to the consolatory power of Bacchus (xvii.). Later comes an elegy (xxi.) in which the poet contemplates a journey to Athens, a project which on an earlier occasion (I. vi.) devotion to Cynthia had forbidden him to entertain. Finally he declares that his passion is at an end:

*See, crowned with flowers my bark has gained the port,  
The shifting sands are crossed, the anchor cast,  
Tired with long tossing I revive at last.* III xxiv 15-18

In the concluding elegy he predicts for Cynthia a loveless old age. The contents of the first three books in relation to Cynthia are then approximately indicated by Sellar when he speaks of the "ardours" of the first, the "tumults" of the second, and the "indifference" of the third.

Despite the close association of Propertius' fame with Cynthia, it cannot be said of any one of the Cynthia elegies that it is a great love poem,\* though the third elegy (I. iii.), which describes how the poet, returning late from a revel, watches his mistress sleeping, and the seventeenth (I. xvii), in which, having rashly parted from her and started on a voyage, he finds himself apostrophising "the halcyons forlorn" full of terror and regrets, and the eighteenth, "Love in Solitude," stand high among Latin poems for tenderness and grace. As in the later books one follows the kaleidoscopic changes of the lover's moods one feels conscious of a

\* H E Butler, *Propertius opera*, p 7.

doubt as to whether, after all, this was a very profitable way of spending the time, and a little inclined to turn against the poet a phrase with which he has himself supplied us, "a long story about nothing."\* Yet Propertius is a genuine lover. If in the expression of it he has neither the idyllic charm nor the fierce intensity of Catullus, yet there is something of Catullan *abandon* in

*A world of kisses will be all too few.†*

and a sombre devotion, marred at times by self-pity, finds noble utterance in the line :

*Strong love o'erleaps the very shores of doom ‡*

In the elegies Cynthia, if a dominant, tends to be a waning source of inspiration. The reputation gained for its author by the first book won him the acquaintance of Mæcenas, and the opening elegy of the first book is a reply to a suggestion by the latter that he should attempt heroic subjects. At first this suggestion meets with small response. In the tenth elegy, still diffident, he addresses Augustus, and anticipates the day when he shall sing of his Eastern victories. But the only public event referred to is the dedication of the portico of Apollo by the emperor (xxx1), and this is treated as an introduction to a poem addressed to Cynthia. But in the third book, which begins with two elegies expressive of his confidence of renown, he is evidently becoming conscious of inspiration from other sources than Cynthia. It would seem that he has been fired by the example of Virgil, to whom he has paid a tribute at the close of the

\* *Maxima de nilo nascitur historia* II 1 6

† *Omnia si dederis oscula pauca dabis* II xv 50

‡ *Transit et fati litora magnus amor* I, xix 12.

preceding book (II. xxxiv.), anticipating in the *Æneid* "something greater than the *Iliad*." Like Virgil, he meditates a poem on the Alban kings (III. iii.), and like him is warned against the enterprise by Phœbus.\* In the poem which follows (III. iv.) he anticipates the triumphs which shall crown Augustus' Parthian expedition, though he will be content to view them as a humble onlooker, Cynthia by his side. If once again he excuses himself to Mæcenas (III. ix.) for not engaging in ambitious literary schemes, defending himself by the example of Mæcenas himself in politics, he gives a conditional undertaking to sing of mythological and national themes, and something of the kind he attempts in his fine though somewhat wild outburst of triumph over the fall of Cleopatra (III. i.) and his elegy on the death of Marcellus (III. xviii). These tentative efforts are not uniformly successful. The poem in which he intimates his intention of singing of love when young and natural philosophy when old (III. v.) is a dilution of eight lines in Virgil's second Georgic†; and his praise of Italy, if not without merit, is greatly inferior to the splendid passage from the same poem,‡ which inspired it. But the pathos of which he is a master speaks in the lines in which Ælia Galla, addressing her husband Postumus, who has left her to take part in the Parthian expedition, expresses her fear :

*Lest all of you they bring me back  
Be something in an urn  
O'er which to weep, for thus, alack !  
Who yonder fall return*

III. xii 13-14

The lament for Pætus drowned at sea (III. vii.), open-

\* Cf. Verg. E. vi 3.

† Verg. G. ii. 475-482.

‡ Verg. G. ii 135 ff.

ing with fine abruptness in a protest against the malign influence of avarice, possesses not, indeed, the pastoral grace nor the religious earnestness of Milton's *Lycidas*, but a yet more vivid sense of the chill and dreariness of death in lonely waters. The lines

*Now seabirds on thy floating body rest,  
Now is thy grave the whole Carpathian main*

III vii. 11.

are at once graphic and express something of the solemnity of the sea.

In the fourth book Propertius' aspirations to write on other subjects than love have taken definitive shape. In the opening elegy he declares that whatever inspiration he possesses shall be placed entirely at the service of his native land, and undertakes to sing of "rites and days and ancient names of places" (IV. 1. 69). In other words, just as Callimachus had written four books on "origins" of myths (*αἴτια*), so the Roman Callimachus would supply, in a series of elegies, explanations of the religious rites and place-names of Rome. Four elegies—Vertumnus and his many aspects (II.), Tarpeia and the rock which bore her name (IV.), Cacus and the foundation of the *ara maxima* (IX.), Jupiter Feretrius and the *spolia opima* (X.)—represent the extent to which this project was realised. Perhaps the account of the battle of Actium (VI.) should be included in the series, inasmuch as it contains an explanation of the origin of the temple and festival of the Palatine Apollo. But the remaining elegies are of a different character. There is a letter (III.) from Arethusa to Lycotas, and a funeral elegy (XI.) on a noble Roman lady, and three more poems, two of them, and perhaps all three, concerned with Cynthia. For there is no



reason to suppose that the mistress, for corrupting whom the poet imprecates curses on a procuress (v.), is any other than she.

The miscellaneous character of the book is possibly to be explained on the supposition that it was issued after the poet's death, and so was made to include whatever unpublished poems he left behind him. But Propertius' aspirations to write a national work, expressed in the opening elegy (IV. i. 1-70), are followed (whether this belongs to the same or a separate poem) by a warning (IV i. 71 ff.) from an astrologer against attempting to deal with serious subjects. It is likely that the former was intended to serve as an introduction to the Roman elegies, while the latter stands in the same relation to the poems in which Propertius returns to subjects more nearly akin to those which had hitherto engaged him.

This last book evidences the fertility and versatility of the writer. In it he strikes out new lines which proved suggestive to his successor. The letter to Lycotas, though addressed by a Roman girl of Augustan days to a lover absent on the Parthian expedition, probably suggested Ovid's series of letters by heroines of mythology (*Heroides*). The Roman elegies were the prototype of Ovid's poem on the Calendar (*Fasti*). The Propertian epistle has a freshness and an actuality lacking in the more ingenious exercises of Ovid, but the ætiological elegies fail of complete success. Derivations are dry matter for poetry, and in narration Propertius is somewhat to seek. He has the Alexandrine weakness for elaborating the circumstances and slurring the main action.\* But if he cannot tell a story, he can paint a picture. It is with sympathetic power and graphic touch that he presents to our eyes the contrast between

\* Instances are IV iv. 87, IV. vi. 57

the former greatness and the present desolation of Rome's ancient rival :

*Old Veii, thou wert then a kingdom too,  
And in thy mart was set a golden throne ;  
Now the slow shepherd's horn thy precincts through  
Resounds, and o'er thy dead the fields are mown*

IV. x 27.

Yet his voice has a more confident ring when he turns again to sing of love and death.

*Spirits there be death's not the end of all.*

Such is the opening line of the elegy (vii), in which Cynthia, lately buried, appears to the poet, upbraids him for his neglect, gives directions for the carrying out of her wishes, dictates her epitaph, and vanishes at the coming of dawn. *Macabre* in tone, as in those lines in which she declares that she shall possess her lover at the last, and that his bones shall mingle with and "grate" against her own, its power is undeniable. It contains withal an admission that the offences which had estranged them were not only on Cynthia's side. She protests that she has "kept faith," and, describing how in the underworld she consorts with those blameless wives Andromeda and Hypermnestra, who solace themselves with retelling the story of their woes, continues :

*So now with tears among the dead  
The wounds of love in life we heal ;  
And—having, ah, how much unsaid !—  
Thy trauchers I conceal.*

IV. vii. 69.

In startling contrast with this poem is the next, recalling an incident of the days when Cynthia was alive. Propertius tells how, tired of her infidelities, he took advantage of her absence to invite two ladies of easy

virtue to supper ; how, despite his well-laid plans, everything went wrong ; and how Cynthia suddenly reappeared, put the whole party to signal rout, and exacted humble submission from her offending lover. The whole poem—the picture of Cynthia with her well-groomed ponies and collared Molossian hounds racing along the Appian way, and the *mise-en-scène* of the supper-party itself—is an admirable piece of *genre* painting. More surprising still, it is pervaded by humour, a quality in which, but for this and one or two faint indications elsewhere,\* one would have pronounced Propertius conspicuously wanting. But the companion-piece to the poem on Cynthia dead is not this merry tale of earlier days, but the final elegy on Cornelia. The contrast between the light woman's unquiet ghost and the serene and noble shade of the Roman wife and mother is effective and surely deliberate.

In a letter to a correspondent Dr. Arnold expressed regret that boys should “waste their time over inferior poets like Propertius.” It is intelligible that the stern moralist should reprobate an author who could meet the protests of a friend upon his infatuation with the reply :

*Let me whom Fortune willed to be obscure  
This spirit yield to utter wantonness.*

I. vi. 25

But Propertius though a most unequal is not an inferior poet. His faults are obvious—an indirectness, occasionally a weakness, of expression which it is not fanciful to connect with irresolution of character, an ever-present vagueness which in particular makes his use of cases the despair of grammarians, a lack of unity of conception, or, on the most favourable interpretation, a

\* *E.g.* II. xxxiii 34.

failure in the art of transition, which constantly raises the problem whether that which appears in the manuscripts as a single poem should not properly be edited as two. But he has qualities not unrelated to these defects. With all his vagueness he achieves a dim richness of effect. Propertius is the most successful of the elegists in producing an atmosphere. There is weight of movement in his verse, and dignity in his language. The last may be exemplified by the simile, fine though ill carried out, in which he declares that he cannot yet sing worthily of the triumphs of Augustus :

*As men who some tall statue cannot crown  
 Low at its feet their wreaths are wont to lay,  
 So we, too weak to scale thy high renown,  
 Poor incense bring, and humblest homage pay*  
 I. x 21

The habit of mythological allusion cultivated by the disciple of Callimachus tends to his prejudice with modern readers. A French critic has recommended as a recipe for extracting essence of Propertius the omission of the passages which begin with "even as," and the retention of those introduced by "just so." But this proceeding would not reduce the bulk of Propertius' elegies to any great extent. It might result in the excision of an average of six or eight lines of legendary parallels in each elegy. But in eight out of twenty elegies in the first book Propertius dispenses with mythological allusions altogether. The prevalence of the mythological element in Propertius has been exaggerated. It does not play so large a part with him as with Ovid, only it is more obtrusive because less adroitly employed, and because it harmonises ill with his prevailing seriousness of tone. And if Propertius is of all the elegists the most Alexandrine in methods he

is the most Roman in tone. The passage about the destinies of the city in the first elegy of the fourth book \* has only to be compared with Tibullus' song of the Sibyl† for its superiority to become apparent. Tibullus cannot match the concise vigour of

*Turn, Greeks, yon horse, your victory is vain.  
I hum shall live, Jove lend these ashes arms.*

IV. 1 53.

But it is in the magnificent defence of Cornelia that the Roman dignity of Propertius finds its most striking utterance. The expression *noblesse oblige* has a fine equivalent in Cornelia's phrase, "laws from my blood derived,"‡ and the grand terseness of her declaration§ that she has "lived nobly between the nuptial and the funeral fires" is almost as hard to parallel as it is to translate within the limits of a single verse. Finally those profoundly affecting lines in which, turning from her judges to those whom she leaves behind, she bids her husband to be mother as well as father to her children, her children to shield their father from the cares to which bereavement might expose him, show that the man who wrote them, ill-regulated in temperament though he may have been, possessed not only intellect but heart.

The mention of the movement of Propertius' verse suggests a reference to his treatment of the elegiac metre. Specially notable is his handling of the second line of the couplet. Not only does he "raise it to the dignity of its heroic consort," || but, as has been observed, he sometimes makes of it "the stronger line of the two." ¶ This result he achieved to some extent by the use of polysyllabic

\* IV. 1. 39 ff.

† Tibullus, II. v. 39.

‡ *Leges a sanguine ductas.* IV. xi. 47

§ *Viximus insignes inter utramque facem.* Ibid 46.

|| Merivale.

¶ Sellar, *Roman Poets of the Augustan Age*, p. 307.

endings.\* To some extent, but not entirely, for a considerable proportion of the Propertian pentameters instanced by critics as specially weighty end with a word of two syllables.† None the less it is to be regretted that, perhaps under the influence of Ovid, Propertius diminished the variety of his rhythm by practically restricting himself in his last two books to disyllabic endings. Perhaps in consequence of this he occasionally ‡ falls into the monotony which later marred the Ovidian couplet. But dignity and variety are qualities which mark Propertius' hexameters too, and his effective use of an occasional spondee in the fifth foot of the latter § supplies evidence of his aptitude for metrical effect as conclusive as may be derived from the cadence of his pentameters.

In the latest of the Augustan elegists the influence of rhetoric on Latin poetry is first conspicuously seen. Born in 43 B.C. at Sulmo, in the territory of the Peligni, PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO was, like Tibullus and Propertius, of Equestrian family, and able to avail himself of the best which the education of the day had to offer. This education was largely rhetorical. In the autobiography which he has given us in one of his elegies (*Tristia*, IV. x.) Ovid tells us that he and his brother, both of whom were intended for the bar, attended the most distinguished teachers in Rome. He is referring to teachers not of law but of rhetoric, to such men as Porcius Latro or Arellius Fuscus. But professional studies had little attraction for Ovid. Of the declamations on imaginary

\* Eg. I. iii 1 ff., I xx. 30 ff

† Eg. *Cimbrorumque minas et benefacta Mari. Iura dare et statuas inter et arma Mari. Nunc tibi pro tumulo Carpathium omne mare est.*

‡ Eg. IV 1 21 ff

§ Eg. *Sunt apud infernos tot milia formosarum.*

cases which the rhetoricians required of their pupils, he preferred those which dealt with more general topics (*suasoriae*) to these which turned on legal points (*controversiae*); and of the former, those which had an ethical bearing. What his aptitudes were was evident. In language exaggerated but graphic he says that to please his father he tried to write in prose, but that verse came unbidden.\* Though he started on an official career and filled one of the minor magistracies, he did not persevere and qualify for a seat in the Senate. Instead, he devoted himself to poetry and the company of poets. With the generous appreciation of his brothers in the art which distinguished him through life he

*Believed he saw in every bard a god*

*L.c. 42*

Barely twenty-one he gained immediate vogue by reciting some of the erotic poems later included in the "Loves" (*Amores*) † Concurrently with the "Loves" he must have been engaged on the "Herones" (*Heroides*), ‡ imaginary letters by female § mythological characters. In the last elegy of the *Amores* Ovid declares that he contem-

\* *Et quod tentabam scribere versus erat Tristia*, IV x. 26

† Begun in 22 B C, they were published first in five books, then in three. We have the later edition, which contains references to events as late as 15 B C.

‡ Some of the *Heroides* were written later than some of the *Amores*, for eight of the former are mentioned in *Am.* II xviii 21. The latter poem, however, was probably not included in the first edition of the *Amores*.

§ Strictly the title is applicable only to the first fifteen of the twenty-one pieces. Nos 16-21 consist of three pairs of letters, each pair including a letter from a male and its reply from the female lover. The authenticity of the three pairs of letters and also the fifteenth (Sappho to Phaon) has been contested, but on grounds not completely convincing.

plates a wider subject than that of his personal loves. In effect he produced a didactic poem (*Ars Amatoria*, published 1 B.C.) on "The Art of Love." Whether as a *tour de force* of the rhetorician ready to take either side in a controversy, or, more probably, to disarm disapproval of the tendencies of the last work, Ovid followed the "Art of Love" by the "Remedies of Love" (*Remedia Amoris*), published 1 A.D. But he made a better reply to his critics by two more serious literary productions, the first patriotic in inspiration, though suggested by an Alexandrine work, the *αἴτια* or "explanations" of Callimachus, the latter more definitely Hellenic and mythological. The first was the *Fasti*, a commentary in elegiacs on the days of the Roman year; the latter the *Metamorphoses*, a great collection in hexameters of mythological tales linked by the common feature of involving some transformation from human to other shapes. The *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* were both composed between A.D. 3 and A.D. 8.

We have reached a point at which Ovid's position seemed assured and his career settled. He was fifty, he was married to his third wife, and he was engaged on his two most important and lengthy works. Suddenly he was assailed by an unexpected blow. By order of Augustus he was exiled to Tomi, the modern Kustendje, on the shores of the Black Sea. Ovid mentions two reasons for his banishment, "a poem and a *faux pas*".\* The poem was the *Ars Amatoria*. But this was not the immediate cause, for the *Ars Amatoria* was published in A.D. 1, and Ovid was not exiled till the end of A.D. 8. The immediate cause was the *faux pas*, and what this was the poet did not feel himself at liberty to state precisely, though he often refers to it in allusive terms. The most probable

\* *Carmen et error. Tristia*, II. 207.



explanation is that he was privy to the intrigue between Decimus Silanus and the younger Julia, granddaughter of Augustus, who was banished on this account in the following year. The difficulty that Ovid, who on this theory was merely an accomplice, was punished more severely than either of the principals is best met by the supposition that the complicity was more a pretext than a charge, and that Augustus' real animus against Ovid was as a corrupter of morals \*. That the accession of Tiberius brought despair rather than hope to the exile may be explained by the circumstance that he had special relations with Germanicus, of whom Tiberius was jealous. It seems unnecessary to resort to the hypothesis † that the offence of the poet consisted in his having been present at some meeting in which intrigues had been hatched against Tiberius and Livia.

Whatever the cause, Ovid was sent into exile and never returned. He died at Tomi in A.D. 17, three years after the death of Augustus. At the time of his banishment the *Metamorphoses* had been written but not revised. It was sent home for publication in A.D. 9. The *Fasti* was in an even more incomplete condition. Ovid's statement, "Six books of *Fasti* have I written, and as many [more ?]" ‡ though oddly worded can only mean that he had written twelve books. But it does not appear that the last six were ever given to the world. Perhaps they had been completed only in outline. The *Fasti* was first dedicated to Augustus, then after his death re-dedicated to Germanicus. The allusions have been brought up to date in Book I., but in Books II.-V. Augustus is mostly spoken of as alive.

\* Boissier, *L'Opposition sous les Césars*, p. 143.

† Plessis, *Poésie Latine*, p. 418.

‡ *Tristia*, II. 549

After his punishment had fallen upon him Ovid wrote the "Sorrows of an Exile" (*Tristia*), a collection of elegies in five books,\* in which he sought to excuse his offence, described the hardships of his life at Tomi, and expressed hopes that his place of exile might be changed. The "Sorrows" were followed by four books of "Letters from Pontus." In subject-matter there is, as the author says,† no difference between the two collections. In the *Tristia*, however, the names of the persons to whom the elegies are addressed are suppressed,‡ seemingly lest their interests should be prejudiced by the receipt of poems from a disgraced man. With the lapse of time this fear vanished, and in the "Letters from Pontus" the names of the recipients are given. To the early days of Ovid's exile § belongs the *Ibis*. The title, which has an offensive connotation, in that the bird was reputed to be of obscene habits, was borrowed from a lampoon by Callimachus on Apollonius Rhodius, and the six hundred odd elegiacs which the poem contains embody an elaborate invective against an unnamed friend of Ovid's, || who had played a treacherous part in connection with his exile. A recital of the most horrible deaths recorded in mythology is coupled with wishes that the same and worse may befall the poet's traitorous friend. A fragment of a

\* Bk. I finished on the journey, A D 9, Bk. II, A D 9-10, Bk. III, A D 10, Bk. IV, A D 11, Bk. V, A D 12.

† *Ex Ponto*, I. i 17, *rebus idem titulo differt*.

‡ Though the long apology which constitutes Book II is clearly addressed to Augustus.

§ Composed between the second and third books of the *Tristia*.

|| There are good reasons for supposing him to have been the orator Labienus. If so the latter was probably also the person referred to in *Tristia*, III. xi 4, 9, and *Pont.* IV iii.

didactic poem on fishing (*Halieutica*) in hexameters, completes the tale of Ovid's surviving \* works.

Such is a sketch of Ovid's life in connection with his poems. It remains to form some judgment about the latter.

The *Amores* is, as the title implies, a collection of erotic poems,† and they are grouped round a person called Corinna. But they are love poems of a very different kind from those of Tibullus or Propertius. The *Lesbia* and the *Nemesis* of the first, the *Cynthia* of the second, pseudonyms though they were, covered real persons. It is more than doubtful whether the name Corinna—also, as Ovid states, fictitious—represented a living original. If it did, the poet effectually concealed her identity, for at the time of the publication of the *Amores* there were those, he tells us, who claimed to be Corinna, and at the time of the writing of the *Ars Amatoria*, conceivably as much as twenty years later, people were still asking, "Who is she?" And indeed, though Corinna supplies a centre for the elegies, appearing as the recipient of a letter (I. xi), as returning an unfavourable answer (I. xii.), as haughty (II. xvii), as starting on a voyage (II. xi.), as ill (II. xiii), or as faithless to her lover (III. xii.), her figure is so shadowy and her personality so indefinite—it is far more so than that of her maid Nape (I. xi.), or the swarthy Cypassis (II. vii and II. viii.)—that one is inclined to be sceptical about her existence. Nor are the sentiments

\* Pseudo-Ovidian are "The Nut Tree" (*Nux*), 183 elegiacs based on an epigram of six lines (*Anth. Pal.* ix 3), perhaps by a pupil of Ovid, and *Consolatio ad Liviam*, 474 elegiacs condoling with Livia on the death of Drusus, d. 9 B C

† Exceptions are III. ix, a lament on the death of Tibullus, and III. xiii, a description of a procession in honour of Juno at Falisca, an anticipation of the *Fasti*.

she inspires more profound than her personality is convincing. Except in the elegy (I. xiii.) in which Ovid depicts himself as the faithful lover, and makes a promise of lifelong fidelity, which it would seem he is very far from redeeming (II. iv.), there is very little show of feeling in the *Amores*. It may be questioned whether Corinna would have lost her parrot (I. vi.) if Lesbia had never mourned her sparrow (p. 143), and the motives of the poems in the *Amores* had already been utilised in some cases by Tibullus and in still more by Propertius, while a few of Ovid's elegies are versions of epigrams by Philodemus of Gadara. It has been argued that the range of possible situations in a love-affair is a comparatively small one, and that all three elegists may have had similar experiences. But one would probably approach more nearly to the truth by extending the sphere of literary tradition imaginatively employed in the two earlier elegists than by assigning a considerable part to recorded experience in Ovid. The artificial character of the pieces which are unconnected with Corinna and deal with erotic commonplaces such as "love is a warfare" (I. ix.), or "morning comes too soon for lovers" (I. xiii.), is even more apparent. Some elegies (I. vii. x; III. ii.), again, are didactic in manner and anticipate the tone of the *Ars Amatoria*.

But if there is not much genuine feeling about the *Amores* there is plenty of wit—sometimes, as in the aphorism that "chastity is absence of opportunity,"\* rather cynical. Their neatness, smartness, and occasional audacities suffice to explain the immediate success which they achieved. The ever-present grace of Ovid is

\* *Casta est quam nemo rogavit*

I. viii. 43.

never better exemplified than in the lines sent to his mistress with the present of a ring (II. xv.), lines which must have been in Tennyson's mind when with far discreeter imagination he wrote the first of the songs in the *Miller's Daughter*. Rhetoric plays an even larger part in the letters from the "heroines of mythology" (*Heroides*) than in the *Amores*. They have been succinctly and correctly characterised as "erotic *suasoriæ*." In them Ovid turned to good account his "declamations on subjects of ethical interest." The injured ladies—and most of them are injured—urge their claims and emphasise the pathos of their circumstances with all the resources of the rhetorical schools. It may be thought that such fluency on the part of persons belonging to the heroic age is something of an anachronism. In point of fact Ovid makes no attempt at local colour; what commended his characters to his readers was that they were thoroughly Augustan, indeed very particularly up to date. Phædra seeks to dissipate the scruples of Hippolytus by the assurance that old-fashioned virtue like his "was already out of date when Saturn reigned." Who thinks that "Minoan civilisation" was like this? Yet if they lack historic verisimilitude these letters are not wanting in psychological truth. In knowledge of the female heart Ovid had little to learn.

With Claude in Clough's *Amours de Voyage*, and with far more justification, Ovid might have parodied Terence's line by *vir sum, feminae nihil a me alienum puto*. His interest extended to details. Hence a short poem on cosmetics (*medicamina faciei femineæ*). The fifty couplets of which it consists deal with a subject too technical to be made interesting, and it is hardly worth mentioning except in connection with the work which followed it, in

which it is recommended to the attention of the fair. Of the three books of the *Ars Amatoria*, a didactic poem on the art of love, the two first are addressed to men, and give them instruction how to win a mistress (Book I.), and how to retain her affections (Book II.). The third book is addressed to women, and tells them how to keep their lovers. This arrangement, if not symmetrical, is justified by the fact that the initiative lies with the male.

There is a certain effrontery and also a certain humour in employing a poetic form traditionally employed for giving serious information to set forth topics like these. The effrontery is patent; this is a poem on the art of intrigue, and the writer makes no pretence that the love of which he treats is any other than sensual.\* The Art of love was precisely calculated to delight a frivolous society which abused the blessings of the Augustan peace. For Ovid the temples which Augustus had restored are but places of assignation. The gods whose worship Augustus would fain revive are appealed to as authorising random love (iii. 87). Of military service, to which Augustus sought through Horace to hearten a softer generation, Ovid will have none. Romulus, says this incorrigible fellow, is the only general under whom he would have been content to serve. He knew how to reward his troops—by the rape of the Sabine women! It is not surprising that the Emperor regarded the poet with small favour. The humour, such as it is, involved in the maintenance of the professorial tone, wears rather thin before the close of the work. All the same, in the "Art of Love" Ovid had a subject admirably calculated to display his talents. He congratulates himself that he was born in an age

\* *Nisi nunc lascivi per me dicantur amores.*

A. A. iii. 27.

thoroughly suited to his temperament, and the modernity which was out of place in the letters of the mythological heroines is quite appropriate in this lively picture of frivolous society in Augustan days. Ovid's keen observation and his fluent facility in description enable him to achieve the perfection of *genre* painting. His use of mythological instances is lively, witty, and adroit. His practical directions—as, for instance, that a man should be neat but not dressy—show plenty of shrewdness; and if some of his exhortations to the fair, as that they should clean their teeth and wash their faces daily (iii. 197), and not eat to the limit of their capacity (iii. 756), indicate that traces of rusticity still lingered in the circles which he addressed, there are other hints more recondite and not superfluous in any age.

The three books on the art of love were followed by the "Antidotes to Love," in 814 elegiacs. This poem, which opens with an apology to the god who had inspired the "Art of Love," is not written with the same relish as the work referred to, nor is it equally successful. It would seem that it was evoked by unfavourable comments on the moral tendency of the "Art" rather than prompted by the rhetorician's ambition to argue with equal plausibility on either side of a question. But the disapproval to which the writer makes some concession did not proceed from official quarters, or he would not suggest as he does (389) that it had its origin in jealousy. In any case he makes no convincing reply to it, for the plea he advances that the precepts of the earlier work were addressed only to the *demi-monde* is open to the retort that they might have the practical effect of introducing the manners of the *demi-monde* into society. But it is evident that the "Antidotes" is no serious recantation of the "Art." The same

subject is treated in the same tone as before. It is not love but servitude to love which is deprecated; and of the sundry remedies suggested, such as absence, occupation, or attention to the defects of the enslaver, the most efficacious is to find another mistress—if possible, several!

A far more effective answer to the charge of frivolity was given in the two considerable works which come next in order. The "Transformations" (*Metamorphoses*), a hexameter poem in fifteen books of about 800 lines apiece, is Ovid's longest work. It amounts to a third of his whole production. As the title indicates, it is a collection of stories which relate the transformation of human beings into various living creatures or inanimate objects. It is obvious that such a work could possess no real unity. Ovid tries to maintain the semblance of historic sequence. He begins with the transformation of Chaos into Cosmos, and ends with the transfiguration of Julius Cæsar into a star. He also makes an effort to give this poem a philosophic rationale by his exposition of the Pythagorean philosophy put into the mouth of the priest-king Numa (xv. 1-478). But the figment of historic sequence cannot be maintained, for the incidents related take place in a region which is outside time, though it is true that when the poet is brought in contact with the early history of Rome he follows the course of events traced by Virgil, and indeed indicates the succession of the Roman kings in a manner hardly demanded by the intermittent part played by transformation in the events which he is describing. Nor does he seriously suggest that the strange changes of shape, mostly described as due to the capricious intervention of irresponsible deities, are so many examples of the working of a natural law. The poem remains a congeries of marvellous tales, and the



want of connection between them is hardly veiled by the inexhaustible ingenuity of the poet in devising transitions from one to another. Indeed, the circumstance that each of the stories (there are 246 of them) ends with a transformation, if it supplies a reason for the inclusion, makes for a monotony which even Ovid's unflagging versatility in description cannot entirely overcome.

Yet his boast that the *Metamorphoses* would win him immortality has been fulfilled. Whatever its drawbacks, the subject gave him ample opportunity for the exercise of his supreme faculty—that of the story-teller. The long succession of tales culled from Alexandrine works of similar title, and told in swiftly-moving elisionless hexameters, different from those of Virgil yet admirably adapted to their purpose, have never lacked readers. It is through this work that the glorious mythology of Hellas, stripped of its religious significance and modernised to suit the taste of Augustan times, supplied entertainment to the dullness of the Middle Ages, and inspiration to the writers of the Renaissance.

Boccaccio and Ariosto in Italy, Chaucer and Gower in England, found a rich quarry of romantic tales in Ovid's encyclopædia of mythology. Nor was the debt of the Elizabethans less. The inference, based on an examination of the classical allusions in Shakespeare's plays, that the influence of Ovid on this dramatist was at least five times as great as that of Virgil, justifies the observation of Sir Francis Meres that "the sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare." \* And not only Literature, but Art as well, exhibits the influence of Ovid. Eminently pictorial, his descriptions

\* *English Literature and the Classics*, p. 188, in the *Essay on "Ovid and Romance"* by S. G. Owen.

make a special appeal to the painter, and the gods whose figures sprawl across the ceilings of Italian palaces, or whose merry adventures have been stitched into the tapestries of Gobelins and Arras, are Ovid's gods.

The six surviving books of the *Fasti* (probably, as above remarked, the only books which were ever completed) contain a poetical commentary on the Calendar for the first six months of the Roman year, one book being devoted to each month. The popularisation of the Calendar, the reform of which had been begun by Julius Cæsar and finished by Augustus, was a project likely to be acceptable to the latter; it responded to the retrospective and antiquarian tendencies of the age; and demanding, as it did, not the development of a great idea, but the varied and lively treatment of a succession of diverse topics, was suited to Ovid's genius. His method was this: After some discussion of the derivation of the name of the month, he takes in order the days which seem to him to call for notice (on an average rather more than half the days of the month), indicating the rising and setting of the constellations, and in some cases the weather which they may be expected to bring, describing and explaining the origins of the festivals which occur upon them, or the historical events of which they are the anniversaries. The astronomical information is the least interesting part of the poem, nor has it the merit of accuracy. "The statements," says a recent writer on the Roman year,\* "are more often wrong than right." If the work was seriously intended for the instruction of farmers and sailors, it supplies most untrustworthy guidance. But from a purely literary point of view there is no part of the subject which is not set forth with

\* Warde Fowler.

crispness, geniality, and constant resourcefulness in the avoidance of monotony. It might be thought, and in the main it is true, that Ovid, with his avowed preference of the present to the past, and his habit of presenting all things in a modern light, was ill fitted for a work of antiquarian research. But if he is indifferent to the serious significance of the Roman religion, its festivals formed a part of the external life of the city which roused his interest. It was an amused glance that he turned on such popular festivities as that of *Anna Perenna*, or the revolving year (iii 503). Already in the *Amores* (III. xiii.) he had shown that the rites and the origin of a provincial religious festival could engage his attention. Again, when he makes suggestions, likely and unlikely, as to the derivation of names and the origin of usages, it is clear that in the exploitation of the ingenuity of others or the exercise of his own he finds no irksome task.

Ovid's was not the genius which elevates a subject, and the predominant note in his treatment of antiquity is playfulness. His desire, however, to overcome some prejudice in the mind of the Emperor, or at any rate the exigencies of court poetry, induced him to stress those anniversaries which were associated with the fortunes of the ruling house, the fall of Mutina, the dedication of the temple of Mars the avenger, the conferring of the title of "Father of his Country" on Augustus. Apart from this, though not possessed or inspired by the idea of the greatness of Rome, he was at once aware of this greatness and proud of it. The highest merit of the "Calendar," as of the "Transformations," is the art with which the stories are told. That the tales of Ilia's dream, of the slaying of Cacus, of the slaughter of the Fabii, had been told already by Ennius, Virgil, and by Livy, caused no

embarrassment to Ovid : whether he be reciting some lovely Hellenic legend, as, for instance, how

*Proserpine gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
was gathered,*

or recounting with equal pathos and dramatic power the rape of Roman Lucretia, in narrative he is always swift, lucid, and effective.

We are conscious of a drop when we turn from the sprightliness of the "Art of Love" and the consummate story-telling of the two more ambitious literary efforts to the "Songs in Exile," which were practically all that Ovid was able to add to his production. The depressed are poor company, and it would be surprising if some hundred poems, containing some three thousand five hundred lines of despondencies, found eager readers. Moreover, in being cut off from the chief source of his inspiration, life in Rome, Ovid was at a terrible disadvantage. How great did not at first appear. Never ceasing to write, he could describe the incidents of his outward journey, and had completed the first book of *Tristia* by the time that his voyage was at an end. The elegy on his last night in Rome is a vivid record of a miserable and reluctant departure. But once at Tomi he is inevitably shut up within a narrow circle of topics, about which he revolves like a squirrel in a cage, the admission and palliation of his offence—a fault, he is for ever telling us, and not a crime—the description of the hardships of his life at Tomi, and supplications to Augustus or his friends to effect at least a change in the place of his exile. The "Letters from Pontus," addressed as they are to named correspondents, exhibit more of the element of compliment and flattery than the *Tristia*, and are by so much

inferior. Only in the face of protracted discouragement he sounds in them, once at least, a note of manly resignation, declaring that "next best to hope is frank despair" (*ex Ponto*, III. vii. 23), and that if such be Cæsar's will he will die bravely by the waters of the Euxine (*ib.* II. 39-40). The first three books of the letters—opening with an introduction (I. 1.) and closing with an epilogue (III. viii.)—represent a collection, though not in chronological order, made by the author of his letters to diverse correspondents. The fourth book is twice as long as the rest. Perhaps a final revision would have resulted in the division of this book and the consequent equalisation in the number of books in the two collections of songs in exile.

The *Ibis*, which is not interesting apart from the question who the object of the invective may be,\* shows a certain relish for horrors, of which there are occasional traces in the *Metamorphoses*. In his later poems Ovid more than once declares that he writes only to pass the time. Such must have been his motive in composing a didactic poem in hexameters on sea-fishing, of which some hundred lines remain. Its merit, as the author says, lay only in the execution,† nor does it seem likely that this gave it distinction. The later poems of Ovid show how a moral pedant, mistaking wounded *amour propre* for public duty, could successfully maim a bright intellect and sadden, though never embitter, a genial temperament. It is not by these that Ovid must be judged.

Last of the Augustan elegists, Ovid occupies the largest space among them in the history of literature. In finish and productivity he surpassed them. More versatile

\* P. 333, note

† *Noster in arte labor positus, spes omnis in illa* (82).

than they, he adapted the elegiac metre to the purposes of didactic and narrative poetry, while his gift for telling a story encouraged him to use the storehouse of mythology to supply, not ornament alone, but the staple of his matter. It is thus that he became the interpreter of Greek mythology to his countrymen, and has done more than any other Latin poet for the entertainment of the world. Not that in poetic power he surpassed either Tibullus or Propertius. Rhetoric was the note of Ovid, and in him the influence of rhetoric on Roman poetry first becomes prominent. This influence was not a good one; and amplification, a form which it constantly assumes, is in Ovid carried to excess. Fluency and facility are misused in the presentation of the same thought in manifold variations, while the thought itself is often trivial, though expressed with a neatness and a conciseness which cannot be surpassed.

Seneca tells how some friends of Ovid observed on one occasion that there were three of his lines which they wished to be allowed to delete. He assented, but with a reservation in favour of three lines which he wished in any case to preserve. When they compared notes it was found that the three lines to which poet and critics respectively referred were identical. Two of these lines are known,\* and it is to be observed that they are both trick-lines, not poetry. The story illustrates Quintilian's criticism of Ovid as "too much in love with his own cleverness." This criticism is indeed true of Ovid, not only as a writer but also as a metrist. In his hands the elegiac metre was perfected, mastered—and tamed. Discarding the use of polysyllabic words

\* *Semisbovæque virum semivirumque bovem. Et gelidum Borean egelidumque Notum.*

at the end of the pentameter, he made it regular, but a trifle monotonous. Not without reason does Professor Sellar deprecate the "rocking-horse movement" of the Ovidian couplet.

But one may note the defects of Ovid and yet recognise his qualities. If there is fatal fluency there is also an unsurpassable neatness of expression which has given its final form to many a commonplace. Nor is the thought always shallow ; on the contrary, it sometimes reveals the shrewdest of observation :

*The better things  
I see and honour, but the worse pursue.\**

The sentiment is Euripides', but it reposed in comparative obscurity in the *Medea* till Ovid made it universally familiar

Nor is this all. Along with fluency, facility, neatness, there are in Ovid sparks of a diviner fire :

*A God within our bosom dwells  
And when he stirs we burn.†*

The man who wrote thus is not to be dismissed as a rhetorician.

The great Augustan poets, of whom Ovid was the last, may be counted on the fingers of one hand. But they stood out from a crowd of lesser men whose works have perished. Generous in his appreciation of

\* *Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor*  
*Metamorphoses*, VII. 20.

† *Est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo*  
*Fasti*, vi. 5

brother-poets, Ovid has in a single poem\* enumerated no fewer than thirty of his contemporaries as bards among whom it had been an honour to him to be numbered. Horace was more fastidious. If he acclaims some writers, mostly of the circle of Mæcenas—a Varius, a Valgius, a Fundanius—he scoffs at the “lacrymose” tragedies of Pupius and wishes Mævius at the bottom of the sea. But he too, like Ovid, bears witness to the poetical productivity of the age.

*Learned or not we all write poems now.†*

From him and from other sources, including Ovid, some dozen names may be added to the thirty referred to above. Their bearers were concerned with every branch of poetry, tragedy, epic, elegy, didactic poems and epigrams. Among them was a solitary writer of Pindaric odes.

Special efforts had been made to write tragedy according to a standard more exacting than that envisaged by Ennius and Accius. But though Virgil declared the plays of Pollio “worthy the Sophoclean buskin,” and though Quintilian has characterised Varius’ *Thyestes* as the equal of any play in Greek, and Ovid’s *Medea* as evidencing what great things he might have accomplished by the exercise of a severer self-discipline, the Augustans did not succeed in making the drama live.

Epic engaged the majority, and for the most part they drew matter and inspiration from Homeric, Cyclic, and Alexandrine sources. But it is not worth while to dwell on poets who are merely names, and it so happens that it is of epicists who found their subjects in recent or contemporary history that some scanty fragments survive.

\* *Epp. en Ponto*, IV. xvi 5

† *Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim* *Epp.* II n 117.



It is true that curiosity as to "mighty mouthed" Rabirius and his "Actian war," stimulated by Velleius Paterculus' association of him with Virgil as the two most eminent of their age, but tempered by Quintilian's estimate "worth perusal—should time allow," must be satisfied by four mediocre hexameters,\* and a single grandiloquent phrase in the mouth of the defeated Antony.† But a fragment of Pedo Albinovanus (also an epigrammatist and author of a *Theseis*) referring to a storm in which the transports of Germanicus were caught while returning from the river Ems in A.D. 16,‡ if hardly suggesting the epithet "celestial" (*sidereus*) applied by Ovid to the poet, graphically express the terrors inspired by the dark Northern waters, which seemed to those who first embarked upon them to be beyond the limit of the world, while twenty-five lines on the death of Cicero from the opening part of Cassius Severus' epic on the Sicilian war § (B.C. 38–36), in their oratorical roll, and their accumulation of phrases, in a characteristic cæsura, and in epigrammatic point foreshadow Lucan, the rhetorical poet of the Neronian age.

Didactic poetry appears at a low level in 541 lines of Grattius' work on hunting with hounds (*Cynegetica*). His treatment of the weapons and engines of the huntsman, of hounds and their diseases, and horses for the chase is quite uninteresting, and where ambitious absurd;

\* The sixty-seven mutilated hexameters dealing with the Actian war discovered at Herculaneum are considered by the best authorities not to be by Rabirius.

† *Hoc habeo quodcumque dedi.*

‡ Seneca, *Suasoria*, vi. 26 The same storm is described by Tacitus, *A.* ii. 23 If Pedo be identical with the prefect of cavalry of the same name (*Tac. A.* i. 66), he may have been an eye-witness of this storm

§ Seneca, *Suasoria*, i. 15. Cornelius Severus also wrote a poem on the Roman kings.

witness the passage in which he supports his recommendation of plain diet in the kennels by describing the disastrous effects of luxury on different nations. Pye on shooting is better. But Grattius' versification is correct enough. The eighty poems in elegiacs, hendecasyllables, and choliambics by writers of Augustan times, collected from the walls of Priapus temples and other sources towards the close of the same period, anonymous, as from their intentional obscenity they well might be, exhibit an equal level of craftsmanship plus a modicum of wit. But it is unnecessary to linger in these byways of literature. As the reign of Augustus wore to its close the fresh inspiration and the high hopes with which poetry had started faded away, and its broadening production declined to mediocrity.

## XII

### LIVY AND AUGUSTAN PROSE

IN the choice of his medium, TITUS LIVIUS provides the outstanding exception to the predominance of poetry over prose which has been noted as characteristic of the Augustan Age. But in two respects he was a true Augustan — he was penetrated with the sense of the greatness of Rome, and he aimed at surpassing his predecessors in art.

Born (59 B.C.) at Padua, in a position which left him leisure to engage in philosophical and rhetorical studies, he began at the age of thirty-two to write (like the annalists before him) a history of Rome from the earliest times to his own. This task occupied him till his death in 17 A.D. He seems to have published his work in sections as completed, for it is evident that he enjoyed a great reputation during his lifetime. Thus we hear of a person who came all the way from Cadiz to Rome for the sole purpose of seeing him, and returned homewards immediately he had done so; while he himself observed, in the preface to one of the later portions of his history, that he had gained glory enough, and might have taken his ease but that his restless intellect found sustenance in the work.\*

The result of these labours was seen in 142 books, in

\* Pliny, *Hist. Nat. Praef.*

which he brought his narrative down to A.D. 9, the last fact recorded being the death of Augustus' stepson Drusus in that year. It is unlikely that he intended to break off with an occurrence melancholy in itself, and of no special historical significance. More probably he proposed to carry his narrative down to the end of Augustus' reign, a course which would have provided a fitting conclusion for his "History of Rome from her Foundation" (*Libri ab urbe condita*), as it supplied a convenient point of departure for the other great historical work of imperial times, Tacitus' "Annals of Rome from the Death of Augustus" (*Libri ab excessu divi Augusti*).

Of the whole as completed by Livy rather less than a quarter survives, comprised in two great fragments, of which the first (Books I-X.) begins with the origin of Rome and breaks off towards the close of the third Samnite war, while the second (Books XXI.-XLV.)\* covers the period from the opening of the second Punic war to the end of the third Macedonian war.

Begun almost at the same time,† and under the same influences as the *Æneid*, Livy's history, even in its present mutilated state, is a no less imposing monument of the greatness of Rome. As the historian anticipating how the struggle with the Samnites is to be followed by the invasion of Pyrrhus, and this again by the wars with the Carthaginians,‡ ejaculates, "What a toilsome succession of events!" we seem to catch the very accents which we have heard in the opening lines of Virgil's epic.

Yet in the same passage there is a touch which is signi-

\* Books XLII and XLIII are defective.

† Between 27 and 25 B.C. The *Æneid* was begun 29 B.C.

‡ Livy, VII. xxix. 2, *Quanta rerum moles!* Cf. *Æn.* i. 33, *Tanta molis erat Romanam condere gentem!*

ficant of a slightly different point of view. The "present greatness," which has been achieved by the successful surmounting of desperate perils, is a greatness "which can hardly be endured." Livy sprung from a township distinguished as late as the second century for its old-fashioned rectitude, was possessed of Republican sympathies, in allusion to which Augustus was wont to style him, though in friendliest fashion, a Pompeian. He held that Rome attained her true zenith in the days when the State was small but the hearts of her citizens great, the crisis of the Punic struggle. From this time onward there had been in his view a continuous decline in the national character. Still, in spite of all, the feeling which predominates in him is that of pride in the mighty nation to which he belonged. "Never," he says, "was there a commonwealth so great, so righteous, or so rich in great examples; never a community into which luxury and avarice were so tardy in effecting an entrance." With sentiments such as these he set out to tell of "the life and manners, the men and the methods, military and political, by which the Empire was won and extended," and then to trace the initial weakening, the quickening decline, and the final collapse of Roman morality. How did he accomplish his great task?

His defects as a historian are obvious. He is no researcher. He makes no effort to get back to original documents. With laws, treaties, and public records he does not concern himself. If he refers to such sources as the "linen rolls in the temple of Juno Moneta" it is only because he finds them cited by the writers whom he follows; and where two of these have quoted them differently, he does not trouble to discover which of them has done so correctly. When Augustus pointed out to

him that the question whether Cornelius Cossus was tribune or consul when he won the *spolia opima* was settled by the inscription on his breastplate in the shrine of Jupiter Feretrius, Livy recorded the circumstance, but neither inspected the inscription nor altered his text.

He is content to utilise the labours of writers who had preceded him, whether Roman annalists or the Greek historian Polybius. And of the annalists it does not appear that he directly consulted the earliest. Where he refers generally to "the more ancient writers," he apparently means Piso (p. 100). It is, in the main, on the more ornate annalists of Sullan or Ciceronian times, Claudius Quadrigarius and Valerius Antias, Macer and Tubero (pp. 102-104), that his narrative of Roman affairs is based.

In dealing with the second Punic war (Books XXI.-XXX) he makes special use of the monograph of Cælius Antipater, and of a more trustworthy guide, the Greek historian Polybius,\* who—for the affairs of Greece, Macedonia, and the East, as distinguished from events at Rome—is, for the last fifteen books, his sole authority.

Where Livy finds that his second-hand authorities differ, he is at a loss, for he has no adequate or consistent criterion of historic truth. Sometimes he prefers the more ancient writer, sometimes he counts heads, sometimes—where there is a discrepancy in figures—he adopts the rough-and-ready method of splitting the difference. Often he leaves his readers to take their choice between different accounts. He is content to absolve himself from the labour of inquiries which he perhaps too readily assumes will be fruitless. The truth

\* It has however been maintained, *e.g.* by Soltau, *Livius Geschichtswerk*, that Livy did not begin to use Polybius directly till Book XXIII.

of the poetical stories of what happened before the foundation of the city he is not minded either to assert or refute. Of the claim of the Roman people to trace its descent from Mars, he remarks that it will be at any rate generally recognised as appropriate. To details he is indifferent. Commenting on the circumstance that the name of a consul is given differently in two accounts, he observes that "it does not greatly matter which is right." In the particular instance the remark is true ; but this is not the temper of one who has a reverence for facts.

Thus inadequately equipped, he is at the mercy of his authorities. "I should be sorry," he says, "to draw any statement from an untrustworthy source." But at times he does so perforce. He is aware that the traditional record is vitiated by funeral orations and family pretensions, but he makes no systematic attempt to discount them. And, indeed, his own judgment is biased by national prejudice. He has no word of direct condemnation for the sharp practice which evaded the penalty to which the surrender of the Roman army in the Caudine pass had rendered the State liable. The atrocious treatment of Capua in the second Punic war is characterised by him as "altogether laudable"; and while he imputes to Hannibal a perfidy "more than Punic," he condones in his own countrymen conduct not distinguishable from that which he condemns in his country's enemies.

Livy's method of using his authorities leaves as much to be desired as the principles on which he decides between conflicting evidence. He does not digest them before sitting down to write the history of a period. Instead, he records events year after year, generally following one authority at a time as the main source of his narrative, but borrowing picturesque features from

other sources, although they may not always be compatible with the context into which he introduces them, and generally mentioning authorities only where discrepancies occur. Thus, as Niebuhr says, "he knows neither what he has written nor what he is going to write." Cases occur where the same events would seem to have happened twice over, and persons whose deaths have been recorded reappear. The explanation of such repetitions and resurrections is that the occurrences in question are assigned by different historians to different years.

Nor, in truth, is the annalistic method the best adapted for tracing such a story of development as Livy purposes to unfold. The reader is conscious of a want of articulation in the work, of an absence of historical reflections or clear *aperçus* of the meaning and tendency of the events recorded. It is true that Livy does at intervals relieve the monotony of his annalistic record by introducing fresh sections of his work by prefatory remarks. Such prefaces, in addition to the general exposition of Livy's purpose at its commencement, are to be found at the opening of the history of the Republic (Book II.), at the resumption of the story after the capture of Rome (Book VI.), at the beginning of the Hannibalic war (Book XXI.), and the outset of the great wars in Macedonia and Asia (Book XXXI.) Moreover, the lack of general reflections is to some extent supplied by the speeches. The reason why the Romans prevailed over the Gauls may be gathered from the speeches of Camillus at Ardea (V. xlv.), and Manlius in Galatia (XXXVIII. xvii.). Again, Livy's practice of introducing speeches for and against some questions, as, for instance, the proposal to allow intermarriage between the orders (IV. ii-v.), or to



repeal the sumptuary law passed during the crisis of the Hannibalic struggle (XXXIV 11-vii.), serves to elucidate them from various points of view. But at tracing the causes and connection of events Livy makes no such attempt as had won the title of a philosophic historian for Sallust.

Nor is the story of the nation's life as told by Livy complete. Rome was great in law as well as in government and in arms; yet of legal development he says nothing. If he pays a tribute to the value of the Twelve Tables he gives no indication of their contents. He is little more communicative about finance. Cato, with his researches into the constitutions of Italian towns, and his remarks on the products, climate, and mines of Spain, had a far more comprehensive conception of the scope of history than Livy.

Even in some departments which he did include in his purview he is an unsafe guide. In important constitutional questions, such as the validity of the resolutions of the *plebs*, the number and arrangement of the tribes after Servius, or the development of the centuriate assembly, he is nebulous because he has no accurate information to give. As a military historian he has been pronounced incapable of conceiving any distinct idea of a campaign, and in his ornate battlepieces he appears as the very antithesis of Cæsar. It is not for nothing that Livy was the first of the long series of Roman historians who is known to have had no personal experience of politics or war. As to geography his vagueness is notorious. It is almost hopeless to discover from Livy on which bank of the Trebia or the Aufidus the battles of Trebia or Cannæ were fought, whether the disaster of Trasimene took place on the northern shore of the lake or in a defile to

the north-east of it, or by which pass Hannibal crossed the Alps.

The extent to which Livy's reputation has suffered from closer study and the application of more exacting standards of historical merit may be measured by comparing Dante's characterisation of him as "Livy who does not err" (*Livio chi non erra*) with the remark of Dr. Arnold \* that "as to Livy, the use of him is almost that of the drunken Helot. It shows what history should not be"

Yet if Livy be judged with reference to his own conception of the function of the historian and the object which he had in view himself, the verdict passed upon him will be very different from that implied in the somewhat petulant outburst of a fatigued historian. Like Cicero, whom he admired so greatly that he estimated all writers in the degree of their approximation to him, Livy held that the work of the historian was pre-eminently oratorical. The main use of history was in the opportunity it afforded of contemplating instances of every kind of action with a view to the imitation of the good and the avoidance of the bad. Of the two motives which had induced a succession of writers to undertake the history of Rome, the desire to contribute greater certainty as to the facts, and the desire to surpass their predecessors in the art of composition, it was the latter by which he was himself attracted. Eloquent, edifying, artistic, this is what Livy desired his history to be.

The 400 speeches of every kind, speeches addressed to Senate, assembly, or popular gathering, judicial orations, appeals of generals to their troops, arguments by envoys, which embellish the surviving quarter of Livy's

\* *Life and Letters*, I. 434.

history, while masterpieces of rhetorical skill, are yet not mere declamations. As elucidating a situation or exhibiting the character of the speakers they possess a certain historic value, and, written as they were at a time when the tradition of practical eloquence was not yet dead, they have something of the conviction and the amplitude of Ciceronian harangues.

But it is in his narrative that Livy's eloquence is best displayed. Naturally it cannot always find equal scope. There are records of obscure campaigns as to which the historian's fears that they may be a weariness to his readers are not unfounded. There are enumerations of yearly happenings which reflect the jejuneness of the pontifical record from which earlier annalists had transcribed them. But Livy maintains throughout a high level of dignity and animation. Where he is paraphrasing Polybius the superiority of his version to the original is conspicuous, and where he reaches critical and dramatic passages in the Roman story—the capture of Veii, the death-trap of Trasimene, the stricken field of Cannae, the fall of Syracuse, or the great battles fatal to the two great monarchies of the East—he never fails to rise to the height of the occasion. In particular his account of the capture of Rome by the Gauls, with its skilful indication of the feelings of invaders and invaded, has for picturesque power and psychological insight hardly been surpassed.\* Among his aptitudes Quintilian has singled out his skill in the treatment of the emotions, especially the softer emotions; and when we are moved by the conflict between duty and paternal feeling revealed on the face of Brutus, the tears of Marcellus over the doomed city, or the shock of bereavement which marred the triumph

\* J. Wight Duff, *op cit* p. 658.

of the victor of Pydna, we feel this commendation to be just. Equally notable is his faculty of seizing a dramatic moment and presenting a picturesque situation. One may instance the passage which tells how, "as the Punic column was crawling slowly over endless drifts of snow, and lassitude and despair were depicted on every countenance, Hannibal rode to the front, halted his men on an eminence commanding a prospect far and wide, and pointing to Italy and the plains of the Po which stretched beneath the Alps, told them that at that moment they were surmounting the ramparts not of Italy only but of Rome." \*

Livy's persuasion that history should be edifying, and his consequent insistence on the moral rather than the material phenomena of society, is in part the cause why his record of the development of the nation is, as has been seen, but partial. Is it, though partial, correct as far as it goes?

Of primitive society he has no conception beyond the mistaken idea that it was innocent, and the vague impression that it was rude. The "antiquity of mind" which induced him to enumerate omens because they were believed in the days which he is describing, does not carry him far in the reproduction of the life of early Rome. He loses here by his unwillingness to mar the homogeneity of his style by the quotation of ancient documents. Thus a genuine fragment of the past like the extract from the Regal law of treason (l. xxvi.) that "law of dreadful wording," is in startling contrast with the milder picture of society into which it is introduced. Some small concession is made to verisimilitude. In the earlier books

speeches are comparatively few, and Menenius is made to address to the seceders on the Sacred Mount in lieu of an oration a fable, that of the belly and the members, "in the old-fashioned manner of the day." Yet the early Romans when they do speak, speak like the men of the Augustan Age. The pleading of Horatius for his son is as effective a piece of rhetoric as is to be found in Livy's eloquent pages.

And yet after all the idea of the Roman character in its steadfastness and its energy, its subordination of the individual to the State, and its combination of the practical with the religious, emerges perhaps the more clearly because it is presented throughout in its permanent and essential features with little regard for that which was accidental and temporary.\* Livy does succeed in making us realise, if not the life of ancient Rome at least the character which won the Empire. And of the men who won it, what a splendid procession defiles before us, from dim figures symbolic of the national virtues such as those of Brutus, Cincinnatus, and the Decii, down through the clearly characterised heroes of the Hannibalic struggle to the men of the period of expansion, the diplomatist Flaminius, the soldier Æmilius Paullus! More elaborate portraits such as those of Hannibal (coloured by patriotic prejudice as it is), of Cato, "a man of spirit and intellect so vigorous that he would have made his fortune in whatever station of life he had been born," and of Cicero, "whom it would require a Cicero to praise," vindicate the justice of the elder Seneca's eulogy of Livy as of all men "the most brilliant in his appreciations of great minds" †

Finally, Livy's conception that history should be

Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 318

† M. Seneca, *Suasoria*, 6.

artistic is realised in the manner of his writing. His style is credited by Quintilian with a "milky richness" (*lactea ubertas*). Flowing and periodic, it stands in close relationship to that of Cicero. But in adapting the Ciceronian oratorical period to the purposes of historical narration, Livy introduced into it some modifications. He made it more elaborate. As an orator Cicero had to speak in such sentences as could be readily followed by his hearers, and this condition makes itself felt also in his written style. Livy had in view only a reading public, by whom the relations of the several subordinate clauses to the main action, and the general result of the whole, could be studied at leisure. Indeed, in his desire to produce an artistically constructed period he sometimes goes so far as to sacrifice the logic of his sentence to its form. Further, in his handling of the temporal conjunctions, of which the narrator must of necessity make such constant use, Livy develops more versatility than Cicero. Along with elaboration he betrays symptoms of decline. In the poetic colouring of his diction, in some divergences from the strict and logical use of the moods observed by the best writers of Republican times, and in an occasional preference of variety to correspondence, significant of a tendency to subordinate lucidity to a subtle surprise of mind and ear, Livy initiates the transition to the prose of the silver age. Yet these features do not sensibly detract from the merits of a writer whom Madvig, accredited by unequalled services to Livy's text, has pronounced the most brilliant stylist that the world has seen.

A universal history from which Roman affairs were almost excluded, the "Philippic Histories" of Pompeius Trogus had they been preserved might have provided

a valuable complement to the patriotic record of Livy. But they are represented only by the "prologues" or tables of contents of the original forty-four books, and an abridgment made in the age of the Antonines (A.D. 117-180) by JUSTINUS. The title, borrowed from a veritable "age of Philip" by the Greek historian Theopompus, was appropriate to Trogus' work only in so far as this centred round the establishment of the Macedonian Empire for which Philip prepared the way. For the scheme of Trogus, due perhaps rather to one Timagines than himself, was more comprehensive than this. It was nothing less than to record the events through which the ancient world was absorbed by the empires first of Macedon and then of Rome. The first seven books gave an account of the oriental monarchies, Assyrian, Median, and Persian, and the affairs of Greece down to Philip's intervention in them. The main body of the work (Books VIII.-XL) was concerned with the establishment of the Macedonian Empire, its disruption, and the fortunes of the kingdoms formed out of it down to the time of their absorption in the Roman Empire. This was followed by the rise of the Arsacids and the history of Parthia (Books XLII.-III) down to the recovery of the standards by Augustus (20 B C). Thus far the East. At this point Trogus turned to the origins of Rome, but traced them no further than the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, when reaching the date of the foundation of Massilia he turns aside\* to describe the fortunes of that city and her wars with the Ligurians. The last book related to the history of Spain down to its conquest by Augustus. The contents of the work are best gathered from the "pro-

\* Trogus was a Gaul, and so was Justinus. Hence perhaps the prominence given to Gallic affairs.

logues." Justin's book is a selection rather than an epitome of Trogus. He calls it "a brief anthology,"\* and says that he omits everything which is not interesting or edifying. Consequently much that is indicated in the table of contents does not appear in Justinus. Especially is this the case with regard to information about the origins of the several nations, which were traced by Trogus as these successively appeared on the scene, and the geographical descriptions which gained the book its alternative but not original title of "Origins and Topography of the Nations of the World."† A compendious and sometimes rather vague narrative of the doings of kings and peoples is amplified at intervals when passages susceptible of rhetorical treatment, such as the return of Alcibiades (V. iv.), the comparison of Philip and Alexander (IX. viii.), or the address of Mithridates (XXXVIII. iv.) to his soldiers, are reached. It is likely that passages such as these, of which the last mentioned is in fact announced as a transcription, give a fair idea of the style of Trogus. For Justinus does not seem to have added anything to his original, and Trogus has been placed ‡ along with Sallust, Livy and Tacitus among "the eloquent." That he censured the introduction by the two former of speeches in direct oration may show that he was less rhetorical than Livy, as he was certainly a greater lover of facts. But the evidence given by the abridgment that in the accounts of origins the Philippic histories embodied a good deal of apocryphal matter, and the absence of any indication that they exhibited insight into the connection and causa-

\* *Breve velut florum corpusculum*, Præf.

† *Historiæ Philippicæ et totius mundi origines et terræ situs*.

‡ By Vopiscus, one of the writers of the "Augustan History"



tion of events, forbid us to regard their loss as very serious.

The establishment of public libraries and the influence of the emperor facilitated the labours of scholars. Typical of these was C. Julius Hyginus\* (64-17 B.C.), a freedman of Augustus and curator of the Palatine Library. A list of his works, comprising commentaries on Cinna and Virgil, a description of the sites of Italian cities, lives of celebrated men, together with treatises on religion, agriculture, and bees, testify to an industry which followed in the main the lines marked out by Varro. Indeed, Hyginus' productions seem to have been more manifold than original. It may be observed that he was the first Roman writer on farming who was neither farmer nor landowner.

Another freedman, Verrius Flaccus, in his treatise "On the Meaning of Words" (*De verborum significatu*) signalised the reign of Augustus by producing the first Latin Lexicon arranged on alphabetical principles. A successful teacher, who was retained by the emperor as tutor to his grandsons and housed by him on the Palatine, he planned his work on a great scale. We know that as many as four books were given to the letter A, and five to P. And it was more than a dictionary. It was a storehouse of facts about grammar, literature, and antiquities, and contained quotations from the whole range of Latin writings from the song of the Salm to Ovid. It survives in a part (covering the letters M—T) of an abridgment, fortunately not too drastic, made by Festus in the third century, and in the whole of an epitome by Paul the deacon, who lived in the time of Charlemagne.

\* He is to be distinguished from Hyginus who wrote on mythological stories and astronomy, probably in the second century

An age of material development like the Augustan was bound to produce works on technical subjects, and the treatise of VITRUVIUS POLLIO has a special interest as the only work on architecture which has come down to us from a nation of builders.

An officer of engineers who had served under Julius Cæsar, Vitruvius had been entrusted by Augustus with the construction and repair of the imperial artillery. In consideration of his services he had, on the recommendation of the Emperor's sister Octavia, received a small pension. To show his gratitude and to assist Augustus in his schemes of building, he wrote late in life (14 B.C.) the treatise which bears his name. The ten books of which it consists include more than is generally understood by architecture, for while the first seven deal with town-planning (1), building materials (2), the construction of temples, Ionic (3), Dorian and Corinthian (4), and other public buildings (5), followed by the arrangement (6) and decoration (7) of private houses, the last three (8-10) treat respectively of water-supply, sundials, and machines whether for use in war or the arts.

The matter is mainly technical, and the obscurity of some of the explanations makes us regret the loss of the diagrams which originally accompanied the text. But there is much that is of general appeal, for instance, a disquisition on the origin and development of house-building, and some information interesting if not always correct on such subjects as timber and the properties of different springs. In the prefaces to the several books Vitruvius gives some personal particulars which are rather engaging. He is, he tells us, old and ugly, he does not tout for commissions, and he would welcome the enactment at Rome of the Ephesian law that archi-

pects who exceeded their estimates beyond a certain limit should pay the difference themselves.

The architect, in Vitruvius' opinion, must be a man of liberal education. His equipment should include a knowledge not only of drawing, geometry, optics, and arithmetic, but also of history, philosophy, music, and sanitation. Consistently with his ideal, he everywhere attempts to provide his art with a theoretic basis. Thus he prefaces his discourse on materials with the opinions of philosophers as to the origin of matter, and an account of devices for improving the acoustic conditions of theatres, with some remarks on harmony.

Despite a certain parade of culture, Vitruvius claims to write only as an architect and not as a scholar, asking Augustus to pardon grammatical errors on this ground. In point of fact his style, sometimes curt, more often diffuse, is devoid of amenity. But the view that the work is a forgery of the fourth century is untenable.\* The vulgarisms and anticipations of later Latinity cited in support of it are explicable as belonging to the popular language of Augustan times.

Vitruvius gives an imposing list of Greek authorities, and he was under special obligations to Varro's "Arts." He claims to have systematised scattered hints from many sources. In works of erudition and of art, more markedly than in technical treatises, the age of Augustus summed up the results achieved by a long succession of writers. Yet if it was a period of culmination it contained within itself the seeds and already in some directions betrayed the symptoms of decay.

\* The treatise on architecture is referred to by the elder Pliny (23-79 A D )

### XIII

#### THE BEGINNING OF DECADENCE AND ITS CAUSES

THE reign of Augustus, which saw the culmination of Latin literature, saw also the commencement of its decline. It is a process of decadence with intervals of arrest and recuperation which must be traced from this point onward. Of the causes to which this must be attributed the most far-reaching was the loss of freedom. In varying degrees, and with exceptions, the imperial government showed itself hostile to the free expression of opinion, and the consequence was that writers were reduced to adopting the language either of flattery or of more or less veiled protest. The exile of Ovid (A.D. 8), and the burning of the works of the rhetorician and historian Labienus (A.D. 12) towards the close of the reign of Augustus, were but anticipations of an evil which was to attain far greater dimensions. But, apart from actual oppression, autocracy was deleterious to the literature because it narrowed the life of the nation. Horace and Virgil could voice its aspirations because for a time these seemed embodied in Augustus. But Augustus was succeeded by rulers as to whom no such idea could be entertained. Political interest declined with the exclusion of the community from the control of affairs. Philosophy was discouraged, for the government was mistrustful of

free thought. Thus literature, deprived of serious objects, tended to dilettantism.

In language some effect must be allowed to the incursion into the field of letters of writers hailing from the provinces. Despite the influence of Rome, now as much as ever the intellectual centre of the Empire, Spaniards, Africans, and Gauls successively imported into Latin literature something of their racial characteristics, modifying the flavour of what had been the native product of the Italian soil.

The very success and prestige of the great Augustan writers had a depressing effect on those who succeeded them. Fixing their eyes on these instead of on Greek models, later authors endeavoured either to imitate or to outdo them. Either proceeding was equally unfavourable to the direct and simple expression of personality, for in the former case authors used the voice of others, in the latter they strained their own. The resulting artificiality and affectation were fostered by two influences which came into operation during the Augustan Age, the simultaneous extension and deterioration of rhetorical teaching, and the practice of recitation, that is to say, the reading aloud by authors of their productions before a selected audience.

It is significant of the immense prestige of eloquence in the later days of the Republic, and of the attraction which it possessed for the Italian temperament, that it was increasingly pursued and more minutely studied with the narrowing of the field in which it could be applied in practice. In the time of Augustus the number and reputation of the teachers of rhetoric greatly increased. At the same time there was a change, slight in appearance but really important, in their methods. It is true that

rhetorical teachers in Republican times had required their pupils to deliver mock speeches, whether legal or deliberative. Cicero himself had done this for practice, even after he had attained a mature age. But it was essentially a matter of private use. Moreover, the subjects of the declamations (*causæ*) resembled or were based upon cases which actually came into court, and the manner of speaking aimed at was as nearly as possible the same as would be employed in practice.\* Very different were the legal and deliberative declamations (*controversiæ* and *suasoriæ*, as they were now called) which came into vogue in Augustan times. A crowd of rhetoricians, conspicuous among them "the great four," L. Porcius Latro, Arellius Fuscus, C. Albucius Silus, and L. Junius Gallio, achieved distinction by delivering such declamations in public. Of both declaimers and declamations we may get some idea from a work by M. ANNAEUS SENECA (commonly called the elder Seneca), a Spaniard of Cordova, who spent most of his long life (54 B.C.-39 A.D.) at Rome. Towards the close of it (37 A.D.) he made, at the request of his sons, a collection of themes commonly argued in the Augustan schools of rhetoric, combined with recollections and appreciations of rhetoricians whom he had known. There were originally ten books of legal and one of deliberative speeches; † but of the former five have been lost, and they are represented by an epitome made in the fourth century, in which the speeches are curtailed but not the introductions. A statement of the case to be argued, ‡ and, in the case of the legal themes,

\* Cic *De Or* 1. 149.

† The book of *suasoriæ* was written last, but appears first in the MS probably because *suasoriæ* preceded *controversiæ* in the order of education.

‡ An instance of a deliberative theme: Cicero deliberates whether

the law which governed it, is followed by the views or lines of argument taken by various rhetoricians, the legal points into which the arguable matter was distributed, and the pleas or colourable aspects under which the action of the parties was presented.\* The cases proposed are ingeniously constructed, but often far-fetched. Seduced priestesses, pirates (useful as creating awkward situations), and fathers ready to seize on any pretext for disinheriting their sons, play a conspicuous part in these imaginary cases. Their romantic character may be illustrated by the fact that they provided material for a collection of novels and anecdotes current in the middle ages under the title of *Gesta Romanorum*.

The conditions under which they were argued were entirely different from those of practical life. Consequently some successful advocates could not do themselves justice in the lecture halls, while more than one eminent rhetorician made a conspicuous fiasco in the law courts. "The declaimer," said an advocate who refrained from declamation for fear of contracting bad habits, "writes not to convince but to please. . . . His aim is to win approval not for his case but for himself." Hence an avoidance of argument as tedious and not lending itself to display, the adornment of language with poetical expressions, the cultivation of a style ingenious and pointed. In view of the estimation in which the declaimers were held, and of the fact that the rhetorical schools were frequented by members of the educated

he shall buy pardon of Antony by the destruction of his works. A legal theme: Law, a soldier distinguished in three campaigns, is exempt from service. A son thus exempted persists in going on a fourth campaign against the wishes of his father, who disinherits him.

\* Hence the title, *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiæ divisionis colores*.

classes generally, whether intended for the profession of eloquence or not, while those who passed through them often continued to declaim as a delightful exercise in later life, the influence exerted by rhetoric on literature was very great.

The fashion of reading aloud literary productions as a preliminary to publication before an audience collected for the purpose was introduced by Asinius Pollio. Known to and eschewed by Horace, it continued to grow till the time of Domitian (A.D. 81-96), after which it suffered a decline. It was a practice unfavourable to composition. In the case of a work of any length the author could only read selections. Consequently he was tempted to elaborate parts to the neglect of proportion and the detriment of the whole. The desire to secure applause encouraged the multiplication of epigrams (*sententiæ*). The literature produced under these conditions, accommodated as it was to the tastes of a limited and cultivated audience, became learned, reminiscent, and wanting in popular appeal. Generally speaking, the habit of elucidating the written word by pause, emphasis, and gesture tended to foster a literary style which in these days of printing would require to be helped out by asterisks, italics, and notes of exclamation. In fact the effect of "recitation," while productive of some special defects, was to a great extent the same as that of the cultivation of rhetoric for its own sake.

Results of these causes are immediately visible in the writers of the reign of Tiberius. C. VELLEIUS PATERCULUS (36 B.C. ?-A.D. 31), who had served for nine years under that emperor in Germany, and had by him been elevated to the prætorship, wrote two books of "Roman Histories" from the time of the Trojan war down to the consulship



of VINICIUS (A.D. 31), to whom they were dedicated. The earlier of these books, which ends with the year 146 B.C., has been eviscerated by a gap extending from Romulus to the battle of Pydna; and since Velleius' treatment becomes fuller as he approaches his own times, his work in its actual state has an appearance of disproportion. He does not, however, give a systematic account even of the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, and in its general character his history is a rapid and compendious sketch. Velleius excuses himself from going into details by reference to the scale on which his history was planned, and pleads "the headlong haste which, like a wheel or a rushing torrent," nowhere permits him to pause. In reality the character of his undertaking is well suited to the temperament of the writer, who has cleverness but little aptitude for thorough study of authorities. As a sketch the work presents some features worthy of commendation. Velleius' reference to "the hundred years of war, warlike preparations, or perfidious peace," which obtained between Rome and Carthage shows capacity for rapid historical *aperçu*. His disquisitions on the Roman colonies in the first book and the Roman provinces in the second are convenient collections of scattered notices under a single head. His assignment of a place to literature in the development of nations was a new feature in ancient history. Generally speaking, however, his attention is concentrated on men rather than movements. If he is too fond of introducing anecdotes, his characterisations—brief like that of Curio, "artist in iniquity," more extended like that of Mithridates, "strenuous in warfare, in valour eminent, always great in spirit and sometimes in fortune, leader in council, soldier in battle, in hatred of the Romans a Hannibal"—

though apt to be overloaded with superlatives, are often extremely happy.

Here the merits of Velleius end. The reign which saw the inauguration of the system of informers and the extension of criminal liability from acts to words was not likely to be favourable to the expression of historic truth. Velleius' history is conspicuous for its Julian tone. In his quarrel with the Senate Julius Cæsar is declared to have law as well as justice on his side. Augustus is exonerated from responsibility for the proscriptions. Over Tiberius, Velleius becomes ecstatic. Something may be allowed to the esteem of an officer for a capable and considerate commander, and there is a genuine ring in his description of the enthusiasm with which Tiberius was welcomed on his return to the command in Germany (II. liii. 4). But to speak of the Emperor's "divine deeds," his "super-human munificence," and his "incredible and unspeakable filial piety" is to use the language of adulation. This adulation is extended to the Emperor's jackal Sejanus.

Velleius' style reflects the literary, as his tone the political, influences of his age. He is a historian of the declamatory type. He labours antithesis, as where he declares that the world which had been too small for Pompey's conquests was not large enough to supply him with a grave (II. 53). With more regard for rhetorical effect than historic truth he emphasises strong contrasts, such as that between the cautious mildness of Sulla while victory hung in the balance and his unheard-of cruelty when it was secured ; \* or sudden changes, such as the demoralisation of Sulpicius, for which he can offer no better ex-

\* *Dum vincit cautissimo lentor, post victoriam audito crudelior.*

planation than "weariness of his own virtues" (II. xviii. 2). At the same time the effort to be at once compendious and eloquent leads him to interrupt cumbrous periods with parenthetic statements of fact \* Eloquence not unfrequently degenerates into bombast, as in his apostrophe of Antony as the murderer of Cicero Macaulay has observed that his book contains far too many exclamations and rhetorical questions for an oratorical let alone an historical work. Indeed two chapters on Tiberius (II. cxxii. and II. cxxx.) consist of nothing else, and the work ends with a prayer for the Emperor's safety addressed to Jupiter, Mars and Vesta which is based on perorations by Cicero and Demosthenes.

Less considerable than Velleius' sketch are the nine books of "Memorable Deeds and Words" by VALERIUS MAXIMUS (*fl. circ. 14-31 A.D.*). For this is a paste and scissors affair, a collection of edifying anecdotes made for the benefit of teachers of rhetoric and their pupils to save them the trouble of searching the histories for examples. The deeds and words are arranged without system under ninety-five headings, such as religion, auspices, dreams, wills, condemnations and acquittals, extraordinary deaths, courage, moderation, humanity, good fortune. Under each heading are two divisions, one of Roman the other of foreign instances, the former being much the fuller owing to national vanity and the sources used. In such a work there would seem to be little room for the display of individual style or character. Valerius' diction is for the most part pure, and this may be explained by the fact that his principal sources were Cicero and Livy. But he embellishes his extracts, writes introductory remarks to the different books and the several headings they com-

\* *E.g.* II xviii.

prise, and generally imparts a declamatory character to the whole. He deals in exclamations, apostrophes, and rhetorical questions, and, where he can, makes a point. The paragraph on Cato (under Fortitude) may serve as an instance. "To your most glorious death, Cato, Utica bears record, Utica where from your valiant wounds there flowed more of glory than of blood. For by courageously falling on your sword you provided mankind with a signal example of how much good men ought to prefer honour without life to life without honour" (III. ii. 14).

In the falsification of history and the flattery of the great, Valerius Maximus' book shows the same influences as that of Velleius Paterculus. If in a particular case there is a notable contrast between them the explanation is not far to seek. Velleius, as has been seen (p. 373), eulogises Seianus, Valerius (under the heading "Wicked Deeds and Words") writes of him as follows: "Crushed by the might of the Roman people in the nether regions, if indeed he has been admitted to them, he is still undergoing the punishment he deserves" (IX. xi. 4). Velleius' sketch was written just before, Valerius' handbook just after (A.D. 30) the minister's fall.

To the tendencies exemplified in the last two writers the fabulist PHÆDRUS (15 B.C. ?-55 A.D. ?) presents a complete contrast. An isolated and somewhat obscure figure, he is neither flatterer nor rhetorician. Only as naturalising yet another department of Greek literature (if so it may be called) can he be placed in relation with the great Augustan writers. A Thracian slave, born, as he tells us, on a "Pierian steep," though probably hailing from the Roman enclave of Philippi, he was in the service of Augustus, was freed by him, and turned a good education

to account by reproducing in iambic verse the beast-fables which, current under the name of Æsop, formed part of the common inheritance of the Aryan peoples.

There are five books of Phædrus' fables, two of them, the second and the fifth, much shorter than the rest. These two books are probably defective, and it is likely that at any rate some of the fables originally belonging to them are included among the thirty-one unnamed fables in the collection of Nicolas Perotti, Archbishop of Manfredonia (A.D. 1430-80), which are generally printed as an appendix to Phædrus' works. The first two books seem to have appeared during the reign of Tiberius, the third and perhaps the two last in that of Caligula (A.D. 37-41), though possibly this pair should be assigned to the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54).

As he proceeded Phædrus became increasingly independent of his original. Of the first two books he says :

*The matter which the writer Æsop found,  
I here have published in iambic lines.*

I. Prol. 1.

But even in these he says that he had made additions to what he found in Æsop (III. Prol. 39). In the prologue to the fourth book he says :

*Æsopian not Æsop's these I name.*

IV. Prol. 11.

And in the prologue to the fifth book he declares that he has long since discharged his debt to Æsop and only uses his name to gain countenance for his own compositions. Apart from anecdotes about Socrates (III. ix), Simonides (IV. xxii. 25), or Menander (V. i.), which cannot be from Æsop, some pieces are recitals of recent incidents. The best of these is a story about a flute-player called Prince (*Princeps*), who on returning to the stage after recovering

from a broken leg interpreted an outburst of applause at a chorus which mentioned the safety of "the Prince" as a demonstration in compliment to himself (V. vii.).

Phædrus tells us that he got into trouble with Sejanus through some passages in his fables.\* He applies the fable of the wolf and the lamb to those

*Who with false charges crush the innocent*

I. i 14.

He makes Jupiter advise the frogs who complained of the ruler substituted at their request for King Log,

*Endure your present ill for fear of worse,*

I ii 31.

and in the fable of the wolf, the dog, and the sheep (I. xvii.) the lying witness meets the punishment he deserves.

Yet it is difficult to believe that passages such as these in an obscure poet could have been resented by the most suspicious of governments, and some have surmised that Phædrus' offence was not political but that his case was prejudiced by his unconciliatory tone. For if Phædrus is not historically correct in explaining that fable was invented as a device whereby slavery could find a voice, he at any rate uses it himself (and it is not the least interesting feature about him) to give expression to the discouraged philosophy of the poor. With him "the mighty" (*potentes*) play the part assigned by the Psalmist to "the proud"; the poor man is the under-dog, it is he who generally has to pay :

*The humble suffer when the great fall out.*

I. xxx. 1.

Who governs matters little to him :

*The poor change nothing but their master's name*

I. xv. 2.

\* *In calamitatem deligens quædam meam* III. Prol 40.

And as there is no other course open it is as well to be resigned. "Serve us right!" (*merito plectimur*) say the pigeons when they discover what an undesirable monarch they have selected in the hawk (II. xxxi. 13).

Whatever his offence and however punished Phædrus survived, and found patrons in Eutychus, a favourite charioteer of Caligula (A.D. 37-41), whom he addresses at the opening of his third book (III. Prol. 2), Particulo, to whom he commends the fourth (IV. Prol. 10) and promises enduring life in his works (IV. *Epil.* 5), and Philetus, apostrophised in the final line of the fifth book (V. x. 10).

The fables of Phædrus are unambitious, and on quite a different artistic level from those of his eighteenth-century imitator. With La Fontaine the fable is a little drama in which plot and characters are skilfully developed, while the moral does but provide an appropriate *envoi*. With Phædrus the moral is all-important. In the majority of the fables (and this is especially the case in the earlier books) it comes first, being in fact a maxim of which the fable which follows merely supplies an illustration or explanation. Indeed a French critic has gone so far as to say that Phædrus' lions, asses, and foxes are no more than algebraic symbols. Hence the brevity which the fabulist rightly claims as a merit. Conciseness of statement is matched by plainness of manner. In the purity of his diction, the sobriety of his style, which but for an occasional tendency to personify abstractions exhibits the very antithesis to the turgid rhetoric of the day, in the structure of his verse, which in the admission of spondees in the second and fourth foot recurs to the freer versification of the early dramatists, and, it may be added, in his literary sensitiveness—for he is ever at war with his critics, and those who fail to appreciate him are likened to the

cock who found a pearl in the dunghill—Phædrus recalls no one so much as a greater writer of servile origin, Terence.

It might seem that in the reign of Tiberius poetry felt constrained either to cower among the beasts or to soar above the sky, for the only poets besides Phædrus were both concerned with the stars, though not quite in the same way.

The emperor's nephew and adopted son, GERMANICUS, (15 B.C.—19 A.D.) wrote a translation in hexameters of Aratus' astronomical poem (*φαινόμενα*): freer, more flowing, and in point of science more up to date than that of Cicero.\* But such a work necessarily allows no opening for composition or for the revelation of the writer's personality. More interesting are the five books *De Astronomia* of MARCUS MANILIUS, apparently assignable to the same reign. This work contains, indeed, allusions consistent with the view that it was written under Augustus; but a reference† in the first book to Augustus as deified and therefore dead seems conclusive that it was at any rate published during the reign of his successor. Tiberius then is the "prince and father of his country" to whom the poem is addressed, and there is a certain appropriateness in its dedication to an emperor who was "addicted to astrology and fully persuaded that all things are controlled by fate."‡ For astrology is the subject of Manilius' didactic poem. Astronomy is dealt with only in the first book, and there only in order to exhibit the field in which astrology conducts her operations. The second book explains the

\* There are 686 lines of the *Phænomena*. There are also four fragments, 200 lines in all, dealing with the planets and their influence on the weather, which are independent of Aratus' *Διοσηγία*

† I 798.

‡ Tac. vi 20.



classification and properties of the signs of the Zodiac, which are all-important from the astrological point of view, the third gives directions for casting a horoscope, and the fourth and fifth set forth the influences of the Zodiacal (IV.) and the other constellations (V.) on the destinies of man.

In choosing such a subject Manilius claims originality. Of mythology he says there has been enough :

*Now all the paths to Helicon are trod,  
And fouled the streams that from her fountains flow;  
Too scant to sate the throngs to those old haunts that go.*

II. 50.

He was aware that his subject was difficult, "fitter to be expounded than adorned." \* He did not know that it was hopeless. But so it was, for its matter is at once highly technical and utterly fantastic. The classification of the signs of the Zodiac as male and female, human and animal, single and double, terrestrial and aquatic, fertile and unfertile, moving or stationary, their grouping into triangles, squares, and hexagons, their order of precedence, affinities, and antipathies is a dry and weary business, while the assertions about their influence—as for instance that those born under the Lion will be hunters and warriors, those born under the Balance of equable temperament, or those whose nativity is governed by the Fishes mariners, adventurous in spirit, and inconstant as the element on which they ply—are but too plainly the outcome of imaginings which have transferred to the stars qualities associated with the shapes under which they have been grouped to facilitate identification, and woven a fabric of superstition out of a *memoria technica*.

\* *Ornari res ipsa negat contenta doceri* III. 39.

Not for us the encouragement, fine as it is, with which Manilius heartens his wearied reader :

*Say'st thou, " The toil is long and close, and I  
By facile reason thought to see the light ? "  
'Tis God thou seek'st. Should'st strive the heavens to scale,  
And learn the fates whose laws thy birth controlled,  
Pass beyond self and make the world thine own ,  
The toil must match the prize, the prize be dearly bought*

IV 387

For Manilius, busied as he is in expounding a fantastic superstition, thinks he is concerned with science and religion, and is as enthusiastic about the one as he is earnest about the other. Here he presents points both of contrast and comparison with Lucretius. A Stoic, he is directly opposed to the Epicurean cosmogony. He finds in the regularity of the movements of the celestial bodies a proof that the universe

*Turns by the will of God,  
Is God itself, and was not formed by chance,  
As he averred who first of atoms small  
Built up and into these resolved its frame,*

I 11. 84

In him the language of Stoicism approximates to that of Christianity. Pantheist as he is, he holds that man stands in a special relation to the Deity :

*God enters into man alone,  
And in him dwells and seeks Himself to find.\**

Yet Manilius acclaims "all-conquering reason" (*Victoria ratio*) as enthusiastically as Lucretius "the aspect and the law of Nature" (*Naturæ species ratioque*). The

*\* Quem denique in ipsum  
Descendit deus atque habitat seque ipse requirit.*

II. 107.

system of either is equally destructive to the personal agency of the gods. "Reason," says Manilius,

*Wrested from Jove his bolts and thundering might,  
And gave to winds the sound, to clouds the flame.*

The language might have been Lucretius' own.

Finally, each draws the same lessons of calmness and resignation, from acquiescence whether in the ordinance of Fate or in the domination of natural laws. Manilius, indeed, makes an effort to keep at bay the paralysis of the will and the suspension of the moral judgment which beset the determinist, reminding us that we hate and destroy noxious herbs though no blame attaches to them, and declaring that

*Crime whencesoever sprung must still be crime*  
I 104

But perhaps the finest lines in his poem are those at the opening of the fourth book in which he protests against the vain solitudes in which we waste our life :

*And always mean but ne'er begin to live "*  
IV. 117.

Manilius is no vulgar spirit, but as a poet he is neither brilliant nor particularly original. He claims that his subject is novel and bids his readers expect "no theft but a work."† And it is true that by dint of laborious paraphrase and the occasional transliteration of Greek astrological terms he does struggle manfully with recalcitrant and untried matter. Some cleverness too he shows in description, as in his characterisation of the shorthand writer "whose letter is a word," or the pantomimist who will "act a crowd though one." But on the digressions patriotic or

\* *Victurosque agimus semper nec vivimus unquam.*

† *Nec furtum veniet sed opus.* II. 18.

mythological for which he perforce at times abandons astrology there rests the shadow of imitation. For instance, his enumeration of Roman heroes conceived of as peopling the Milky Way,\* is a vastly inferior *rechauffée* of a similar list in Virgil. His versification is fluent and correct; but the Augustans had perfected the instrument, and no new music is drawn from it by Manilius. His clauses tend to an undue multiplication, and an excessive attention paid to antithesis betrays the influences of scholastic rhetoric.

The circumstances which made the reign of Tiberius barren of high literature did not prevent the production of practical treatises. The "Arts" of A. CORNELIUS CELSUS, a work of the same class as the "Liberal Arts" of Varro (p 231), was an encyclopædia of agriculture, medicine, war, rhetoric, jurisprudence, and philosophy, of which the sole surviving section, eight books on medicine written in plain but correct Latin, make him an authority on the subject.

## XIV

### THE CLAUDIO-NERONIAN AGE

WITH the accession of Claudius (A.D. 41) literary production, which had sensibly diminished under the two preceding emperors, began to revive.

QUINTUS CURTIUS RUFUS, who wrote soon after the beginning of the new reign, is in some respects comparable with the prose writers of the time of Tiberius. He declaims like Velleius Paterculus, he moralises like Valerius Maximus; but he introduces a new element into Roman history by his choice of matter. The first of Roman historians to deal with a subject which had nothing to do with Rome, he wrote the history of Alexander in ten books. What attracted him was the romantic character of the subject, and his work was based on the Greek of Clitarchus (about 300 B.C.) who had made of the exploits of Alexander a tale of adventure and of wonder. Not that Curtius would seem to have invented on his own account. By such an admission as "I copy more than I believe" he disclaims the rôle of an inventive romancist, and, it may be added, that of a critical historian, to which one or two isolated corrections of his authorities would in any case not have sufficed to entitle him. But he does set himself to write up his original with all the arts of contemporary Roman rhetoric, his aim being to produce a work which shall be entertaining. With this object he avoids all that

can weary his readers, such as technical descriptions of battles, details of political organisation, or the discussion of chronological difficulties. Over much that is historically important he passes lightly, while he elaborates striking scenes and throws into relief the personality of his hero. In his desire to entertain Curtius succeeds, for the subject has a fascination which a duller writer could hardly rob of its interest, and Curtius' narrative is well arranged and lucid.

Neither soldier nor politician, Curtius does not appreciate the greatness of Alexander either as a general or an empire builder. Thus he regards his assumption of oriental manners merely as a symptom of degeneration ; while with a certain jealousy of the Greek conqueror, which appears in Livy and was perhaps widely shared at Rome, he attributes an undue share in his success to Fortune. Curtius' book is indeed at once a recital of moving adventures and a study in character development. This aspect of his work is connected with a general tendency to moralise, Curtius is one of those who consider that it is one of the functions of the historian to supplement the narration of events by comments introduced by "so true it is." This he does not only in his own person but also in that of his characters. It has been remarked of Darius in particular that he is an "indefatigable preacher." Curtius reveals the rhetorician in a plethora of speeches, and in pointed observations. The speeches rise less naturally out of the circumstances than Livy's, and betray more obvious elaboration of the commonplace. Consequently they are felt to be interruptions of the narrative. In the apophthegms there is a certain glitter ; but they have neither the compression nor the profundity which wins a lasting or a widespread

currency. Yet Curtius is no contemptible stylist, and if his somewhat limited vocabulary is less remarkable for strange words than for familiar words used in strange senses,\* he has in the structure of his sentences modelled himself to some purpose on Livy. The difference between them is significant, for while the anatomy of the sentences is similar, the curter and less loaded periods of Curtius reflect that impatience with the long sentence which was to issue in the style of Seneca.

Rhetorical in treatment, despite the nature of the subject-matter, which, as the author complains, does not lend itself to eloquence, is the "Topography" (*Chorographia*) of GAIUS POMPONIUS MELA, the first, and indeed the only, exclusively† geographical work extant in Latin.

The date is indicated by a reference to the opening of the "long closed" island of Britain, which is probably to be identified with the invasion of this country by Claudius in A.D. 43. The *Chorographia* is a brief and popular compendium in three books. Constructed on the principle of the Greek "circumnavigations" (περίπλοιοι) it deals inadequately with inland regions. While some accurate knowledge is displayed of the Straits of Gibraltar, near which the writer's native place, Tergintera, was situated, and of the north-west corner of Spain, the work falls on the whole rather below the level of information available at the time, and tales of the treasure-guarding gryphons and one-eyed Arimaspians of Scythia are repeated from authorities as remote as Herodotus.

From the point of view of literature the reign of

\* *Curtius*, ed. Heitland and Raven, Introd. 13.

† Geography forms one of the sections of Pliny's "Natural History

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Claudius is but an ante-room to that of Nero. The productions of the latter period are characterised by a certain brilliancy and straining for effect which seem in some sort a reflection of the febrile extravagance of the last of the Julian emperors. The influence of the rhetorical schools and the recitation room was reinforced by the advent of a succession of writers of Spanish birth—the most distinguished among them members of a single family—who brought with them a national aptitude for rhetoric and florid adornment. As a consequence an effort is discernible to outdo the Augustans. The reign of Nero saw the development of a prose style which was the antithesis to that of Cicero, and the production of an epic which presents at every point a contrast to the *Æneid*. The majority of the writers were inspired by Stoicism, which in the hands of Roman teachers became not so much a philosophy as a religion, and found scope for its exercise in fortifying men's minds against the seductions of luxury and the menace of despotism. Its influence on literature appears in a moral strenuousness which is in strange contrast with artificialities and bizzarries of style. Not that the literature of the time was predominantly serious. Fashionable coteries—like that of which Nero himself was the centre—busied themselves with mythological subjects,

*Phyllisæ Hypsipeles and woeful tales of the poets,*

set forth in verses of mellifluous and more than Ovidian smoothness. In the domain of poetry and with minds of second-rate capacity the influence of the great models weighed heavily.

Pastoral poetry is at the best an artificial poetic form,

\* *Persius*, 1. 34.



and the seven idylls of T. CALPURNIUS SICULUS, who wrote early in the reign of Nero, are a copy of a copy, for they are closely imitated from those of Virgil.\* There are the same shepherds competing in alternate strains, and singing of their loves and their rustic occupations. But Calpurnius has not the profound love for the country which shines through Virgil's Theocritean centos. He accumulates pastoral properties and labours at detail; but if he occasionally, and indeed often, attains prettiness, he never rises above it. Nor is his taste impeccable. He can over-elaborate a borrowed conceit,† or make use of a simile far-fetched and absurd‡ His trifling hexameters, correct in their adherence to the metrical usage of bucolic verse, do not succeed in avoiding monotony.

Like Virgil, Calpurnius seeks to give actuality to his pastorals by introducing into them allusions to contemporary events and persons. In his first idyll Corydon and Ornytus discover, inscribed on the bark of a beech tree, a prophecy by Faunus of the Golden Age to be inaugurated at Nero's accession; and in the fourth Corydon and Amyntas sing before Melibœus of the happiness enjoyed under Nero's rule. There is reason to believe § that Melibœus, whom Corydon here thanks for his bounty

*E* v 15, however, based on the third Georgic, *E* iii, rather on Theocritus vii than any one eclogue of Virgil, while *E* vi, "the quarrel," the least successful of Calpurnius' eclogues, has no known prototype

† Cf *E*. ii 15-20 with Virg *E* viii 2-4

‡ A shepherd complains that he is pining "like a thrush when the vintage is over, or a hare when the olives have been gathered." *E* iii 48.

§ This view is connected with the not impossible ascription to Calpurnius of a panegyric in 261 hexameters on Piso

and asks to bring the poem in question to the notice of the Emperor, represents C. Calpurnius Piso, the distinguished noble who was afterwards the centre of a conspiracy against Nero ; and if so the poet himself may owe his name Calpurnius to the fact that he was a son of one of Piso's freedmen.\* Allusions such as these have not the interest as they have not the significance of Virgil's, for they speak the language of flattery and courtly compliment rather than voice the aspirations of the age. In point of fact, no such anticipations were entertained at the accession of Nero as at the restoration of peace by Octavian. The most striking of Calpurnius' idylls is the last, in which, as in the first of Virgil's eclogues, a shepherd describes a visit to the capital. But its interest consists not in what the shepherd mentions as the crowning happiness of his visit, a distant glimpse of an emperor who combined the aspect of Apollo and of Mars, but in a description of an amphitheatre to which the minuteness of its realism (anticipating the *silva* of Statius) gives an antiquarian value.

A truer representative of his age was MARCUS ANNÆUS SENECA, commonly called the Philosopher to distinguish him from his father, L. Annæus Seneca the Rhetorician. Like the latter a native of Cordova, he was born in A.D. 3 and brought to Rome as an infant. All that is known of his early life indicates an ardent and enthusiastic temperament. Rhetoric he studied with a success to which a brilliant career at the bar and indeed every word he penned bear ample witness. In philosophy his teachers were the Stoics, Attalus and Sotion, who to Stoicism had

\* His other name, Siculus, he probably owes to the character of his idylls. *E.* iv. 42 perhaps indicates that, like so many of the writers of this period, he was a Spaniard.

added the practice of self-examination encouraged by the Sextii and Pythagoreanism. Under the influence of the former the boy of sixteen adopted an ascetic rule of life, while in imitation of the latter he became for a year a vegetarian. His sober father induced him to "dine better" and dress in the fashion, but throughout his varied career he retained a preference for plain living and philosophic meditation. Early works (now lost) on earthquakes and on the geography of India and of Egypt—the latter perhaps suggested by a visit to that country (A.D. 31-2) when he was the guest of his aunt, the governor's wife—foreshadowed the author of the "Inquiries into Natural Science." But the official career on which he entered as *quæstor* before A.D. 37 can have left him little time for learned studies. As an advocate and as a man of fashion connected with the court his brilliant gifts attracted attention and exposed him to danger. His eloquence at a trial in the Senate excited the jealousy of Caligula, and would have been fatal to him had not the Emperor been assured that he was on the point of dying from asthma. Early in the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41) he was exiled to Corsica on the charge of an intrigue with the Emperor's niece. To the time of his exile belong two works of similar title but different intention. The letter written to his mother to console her in her grief at his exile (*Ad Helviam matrem de consolatione*), elevated in the temper with which he envisages his own position and tactful in the appeal which it makes to her fortitude, is one of the most admirable of his productions. On the other hand, the appeal addressed to the Emperor's powerful freedman Polybius (*Ad Polybium de consolatione*), betrays a weakness in Seneca's character of which other evidences are supplied by his career. Ostensibly written to

console him for the loss of his brother, it aimed at inducing him to procure the writer's recall. Its ingeniously worded but insincere commonplaces are disfigured by flattery of the freedman and his master. "When," he writes, "tears rise to your eyes, turn them towards Cæsar and they will be dried at the sight of that mighty and illustrious divinity"

This self-abasement was vain. But in A.D. 49 Agrippina, now the wife of Claudius, recalled the exile and made him tutor to her son Domitius, afterwards the Emperor Nero. Honours and wealth were showered on Seneca, and when four years later Nero succeeded to the throne Seneca was associated with Burrus as his director. It would seem that he hoped as governor to the ruler of the world to place his philosophical ideas at the service of humanity. Traces of such an aspiration are discernible in the treatise on Clemency (*De Clementia*), which he addressed to Nero at the outset of his reign. Tactfully avoiding the appearance of giving advice to the emperor he assumes that he is already disposed towards the virtue which he wishes to inculcate. If he quotes Nero's famous ejaculation, made when he was asked to sign a death-warrant, "How I wish I did not know how to write!" it is in the hope of converting into principle what was at present the impulse of a generous nature. To some extent Seneca's aim was realised in the years of good government known as the *Quinquennium Neronis*; but not fully and not for long. Nero accepted the theory of absolutism propounded in Seneca's treatise, but not the obligation to humanity which was its correlative. At the very outset the position in which Seneca was placed involved him in concessions to principle, and privy to the murder of Britannicus was to

be followed later by the necessity of acquiescing in that of Agrippina. Not to dwell upon these darker passages, the courtier appears less admirable than the philosopher. His skit on the death of Claudius (*Ludus de morte Cæsaris*),\* in form a Menippean satire (p. 225), is witty enough, but its unkind insistence on the dead emperor's physical infirmities and its savage attacks on cruelties for which he had hardly been responsible are in unpleasing contrast to the flatteries which the writer had lavished on him when alive. Seneca's manner of life, too, seemed little in accordance with his professions. His enemies would ask what rules of philosophy he had obeyed in amassing three millions in four years of imperial friendship. Against criticisms of this kind he seems to defend himself in his treatise on the happy life (*de vita beata*) addressed to his brother Gallio. After defining happiness as consisting in virtue and a life lived in accordance with nature, he addresses himself to those who abuse philosophy on the grounds that the words and the acts of philosophers do not agree. He says for himself, "I am not a sage, and never shall be." Similar reproaches had been made against Plato, Epicurus and Zeno. But they told people not how they themselves lived but how they ought to live. It is not the possession of riches—which indeed provide virtue with opportunity—but the undue estimation of them which is blameable.

But there came an end to the need for accommodations. Nero was getting out of hand, and the death of Burrus

\* The *Ludus de morte Cæsaris* is probably identical with the *Ἀποκολοκύντῳσις* or "pumpkinification" of Claudius which Dio Cassius (lx 35) says Seneca wrote, although in the *Ludus* the emperor is not represented as turned into a pumpkin, but as punished in other ways.

(A.D. 62) broke Seneca's power. Feeling his position insecure, he asked permission to retire, and offered to return to Nero the wealth he had bestowed upon him. Nero refused the latter offer, and did not immediately grant the former. But Seneca went into retirement and changed his way of living. It was now that he wrote his treatise "On Repose" (*De otio*), in which he maintains that the contemplative life was not in disaccord with Stoic principles. "The sage will not strive to no purpose" (iii. 3) and "contemplation itself is a kind of action" (v. 8). In pursuance of ideas adumbrated in this treatise he began late in life his "Inquiries into Natural Science" (*Quæstiones rerum naturalium*); and in that complete course of morality which is comprised in the letters to Lucilius we see him labouring at his own improvement as well as that of his friend, and schooling himself to face old age, disease, and death. He was soon called upon to put his lessons to the proof. Nero had long wished to be rid of him, and in the detection of the Pisonian conspiracy (A.D. 65) he found his opportunity. Seneca was accused of complicity and died with philosophic resolution.

Three "Consolations," three longer and six shorter ethical treatises, a work on natural philosophy, and a collection of letters—such are the surviving works of Seneca in prose. Their interest is ethical; it is with reason that Dante characterises their author as *Seneca morale*. History he considered irrelevant, for it tells us what men have done and not what they ought to do; and with the trivialities with which "scholarship" then occupied itself he had no patience. Of the three divisions of philosophy, physics, dialectics, and ethics, it is only with the last that he seriously concerns himself. As for the second he calls it not exactly "skittles," but "draughts" (*latrunculis*

*ludimus*). His attention is concentrated on the question how men ought to live.

The philosophy in which he finds an answer to this question is Stoicism. With its main principles he assumes an acquaintance. "I need not remind you," he writes to a correspondent, "that no one is happy except the sage." But he makes no secret that he is an eclectic. "I am wont," he observes, "to pass into the camps of other folk, not as a deserter but as an explorer." The maxims which he gives to Lucilius as his "daily allowance" are taken from Epicurus as often as from the Stoic teachers, and he declares that he is "no man's pupil" (*nullius sum*).

Hence his Stoicism is of a fluid kind. It is modified in two directions: it is at once more spiritual and more human than the older Stoicism—more spiritual in accordance with the aspirations of an elevated nature, more human in accommodation to the needs of individuals struggling, like Seneca himself, to live better lives in circumstances which the social and political conditions of his time rendered exceptionally difficult. Thus while the Stoics held that the soul like the body was material, Seneca is constantly driven towards the Platonic opposition between flesh and spirit, and while they maintained the identity of God with the universe, Seneca often uses language which implies that he is a moral being and cares for men. Similarly the Stoic theory of the equality of offences and the negligibility of all moral attainment short of perfection while not disclaimed in theory is in practice abandoned.

Thus spiritualised and humanised the language of Seneca's Stoicism often approaches that of Christianity. Sentiments such as that God is the Father of the universe, that "we have all sinned," or that we should pardon

those who do us wrong "because it seems they know not what they do," make us cease to wonder that Lactantius refers to him as "often one of us"; or that Jerome, on the strength of an apocryphal correspondence between him and St. Paul, should have counted him a Christian saint.

Such correspondences are more apparent than real. Of the two notes of Christianity, "inwardness" and "meekness," the first was shared by the Stoics. For the Stoic as for the Christian "the kingdom of heaven is within us," and he is bidden to attach no importance to external standards. But side by side with the humility which is produced in the aspirant by self-examination is the arrogance which speaks of him who has attained as the equal and in some aspects the superior of God, and along with the recognition that slaves and free are citizens of a common city is the proud doctrine of self-sufficiency; while with Stoicism personal dignity assumes the predominating position which is occupied in Christianity by love.

That such variations of tone should be found in Seneca's writings is not surprising. It was not his intention to formulate a philosophy, but to find remedies for human needs, and the needs of individuals. While in the longer treatises, such as those on anger (*De ira*) and on benefits (*De beneficiis*) the treatment is more or less general, for the most part he writes as the spiritual director of particular persons; and, as he says, different cases require different treatment (*aliter cum alio agendum*). Paulinus, superintendent of the corn supply, is distracted and engrossed with business. He is urged (in the *De brevitate vitæ*) to devote himself to the study of true wisdom. Serenus is afflicted by a vague restless-



ness and discontent. He is recommended (in the *De tranquillitate animi*) to take part in public affairs. His softer nature is braced by an exposition of that tenet of "the manly philosophy" that the sage can be affected by neither insult nor injury (*De constantia sapientis*). Marcia (*Ad Marciam de consolatione*) is appealed to on the side of her pride, Polybius (*Ad Polybium de consolatione*) on that of his love for letters.\*

But it is in the letters to Lucilius that the suppleness and adaptability of Seneca appear to the best advantage. Lucilius had already been the recipient of one treatise. To his questionings as to why good men are afflicted if Providence rules the world, Seneca had responded with a confident vindication of Heaven as preparing for itself by trials those whom it loves best (*De Providentia*, 1. 6), and an eloquent development of the position that troubles are welcome as giving virtue her opportunity (*calamitas virtutis occasio*). In the letters he undertakes the complete moral direction of Lucilius, telling him what to see, what to read, and even what to wear. The moral letters, then, in complete contrast with those of Cicero, which are the record of a life, and those of Pliny, which present a picture of society, are entirely directed towards edification. Throughout the first three books the writer concludes each letter with a maxim for the day borrowed from some philosopher, much as an evangelical might supply a Biblical text. But it is astonishing with what tact and charm he pursues his object. No airs of superiority are assumed. "It is," he writes, "as if you and I were in the same hospital. I talk to you of a complaint from which we are both suffering, and tell you of remedies to cure it." And the letters are by no

\* Pichon, *Hist. Lit. Lat.*, p. 502.

means all sermons. Seneca writes of his own doings and refers to those of his friend ; and whatever experience he is describing—it may be the excitement over the arrival of the mail-boats for Alexandria, the horrors of darkness and dust in the tunnel at Baiae, or the discomforts of sea-sickness—is expressed with a vividness which reveals a highly sensitive and impressionable temperament. Seneca can tell a story, too, with the grace of a Society *raconteur* super-added to the art of the rhetorician. But he never loses sight of his object, and the moral is always drawn. The wasting of Ætna suggests the reflection that virtue does not perish, and a visit to Scipio's villa at Liternum introduces a contrast between ancient frugality and modern luxury.

To Lucilius Seneca addressed his latest work, "Enquiries into Natural Science" (*Quæstionum Naturalium libri septem*). This is not a purely scientific treatise, for the author on principle constantly draws moral lessons from the subjects under discussion, and indulges in satiric tirades on luxury and immorality. Nor is it a systematic treatise. Seneca treats only a selection \* of topics, mainly belonging to the second of the three divisions, things in the heavens (*cælestia*), things between heaven and earth (*sublimia*), and things terrestrial (*terrestria*), into which he says his subject falls, and he handles them in a conversational or epistolary style, with the occasional introduction of an imaginary opponent. Nor, again, is it an original contribution to knowledge, for the expert in psychology

\* Phenomena of light and especially the rainbow (Bk I); thunder and lightning (Bk. II.), water (Bk III); the rising of the Nile, and hail and snow (Bk. IV.); wind (Bk. V); earthquakes, with a detailed account of that in Campania, A.D. 63 (Bk. VI), comets (Bk VII).

is an amateur in science. Rather is it to be regarded as representing the views on physics commonly held by educated men in the time of Nero. These, on the whole, show some advance on Lucretius, who in his fifth book had dealt with much the same subjects a hundred years before. Lucretius, for instance, held that the sun was a foot and a half in diameter. Seneca believed it to be larger than the earth. Generally speaking, however, the "Enquiries" share the weaknesses common to all the ancient works on science—neglect of experiment, recklessness in the use of analogy, and over-confidence in assertion. But if Seneca's own observation plays a very small part in the work, he has brought an independent judgment and a scientific imagination to bear on certain matters of controversy. He speaks of the philosophers generally as "credulous folk," and has no scruple in ridiculing "some of the silly fancies of our Stoic friends." His surmises that comets move in orbits, that earthquakes are connected with volcanoes, and that the number of the planets would some day be discovered to be more than five in number, have been confirmed by subsequent research. Here his own remarks on earlier thinkers—"a great contribution to discovery was made by the man who first conceived the hope of its possibility"—has its application to himself. Of the potentialities of scientific study he indeed cherished an inspiring hope. "Nature," he writes, "does not reveal all her secrets at once. We imagine that we are initiated into her mysteries, while we are as yet lingering about her outer courts" \*

In no writer is seriousness of intention combined with so much artificiality of manner. Seneca's style, indeed,

\* I am much indebted to *Physical Science in the Time of Nero*, by J. Clarke and Sir A. Geikie.

demands particular notice because it epitomised the tendencies of his day. As Tacitus observes, it hit off the taste of his contemporaries. But it did more. The style of Seneca superseded that of Cicero and strongly affected even those who like Quintilian protested against its excessive influence. Its salient feature is the short sentence. The lengthy periods of Cicero and Livy were abhorrent to Seneca, and it is to the succession of short and unconnected clauses which abound in his writings to which Caligula referred when he characterised Seneca's style as "sand without lime." Here is to be seen the influence of the rhetorical schools in the desire to win frequent applause by making points as often as possible. One feature, however, which became prominent in a later development of Latin prose is absent in Seneca. He does not seek to gain variety by avoiding correspondence. The rhythm of the sentence-endings is similar to that affected by Cicero, a fact which taken into conjunction with the shortness of the sentences themselves is productive of a certain monotony. The desire for brevity is seen in the language as well as in the structure of the sentence, the chief means by which it is attained being asyndeton, the omission\* of words which may be readily supplied, and the use of words in a pregnant or emphatic sense†. Yet Seneca does not carry curtailment to the point of unintelligibility, and the aphorisms in which he summarises his meaning are surprising in their luminosity as well as their neatness. On the other hand with this

\* *E.g. Cur trans mare possides? Cur plura quam nosti? De vita beata, xvii 2.*

† Mr. Summers, from whose introduction to *Select Letters of Seneca* I have derived much help, quotes as typical, *Horæ momentum interest inter solum et aliena genua* (de Tranquillitate animi, xi 9) "Between (sitting on) the throne and (clasping) the knees of another."

brevity of sentence and of language is combined prolixity in another direction. Quintilian declares that Seneca "would have been approved by the unanimous judgment of educated persons if he had not weakened weighty matter by petty conceits,"\* and Fronto complains that he "dresses up the same thought a thousand times in different clothes."† Instead of making a broad comprehensive statement once for all Seneca develops his meaning in a succession of ingeniously varied illustrations. Further he is fond of playing on words of similar meaning,‡ while antithesis is never absent from his writing. Seneca himself would doubtless have maintained that repetition is necessary to make an impression, and variation desirable to make repetition endurable, and his verbal jingles by the assistance they give to the memory certainly subserve his purpose as a moral teacher. But the latter justification does not always hold good, and Seneca cannot be absolved from the imputation of indulging his ingenuity by playing with an idea beyond the point at which he has made its meaning clear.

Seneca is known to us not only as a writer of moral treatises but also as a tragedian. Nine tragedies (*Hercules Furens*, *Troades*, *Phoenissæ*, *Phædra*, *Medea*, *Thyestes*, *Edipus*, *Agamemnon*, and *Hercules Octaeus*) are ascribed to him. That he was the author of these § there is no reason to doubt. Style and philosophy are the same in the plays as in the treatises.

The dramas of Seneca are very different from the old Latin tragedies. The plays of Ennius, Pacuvius,

\* *Inst. Or.* X. l 130

† p. 157.

‡ A good instance is *nunquam nimis dicitur quod nunquam satis discitur*, *ep.* xxvii. 9.

§ Part of the last-mentioned play is by another hand.

and Accius were free renderings of Greek originals, intended, with the necessary modifications, to make the Greek drama intelligible to a Roman audience. Seneca made use of the old plots, but he re-wrote the plays in the literary manner of his day, which had been formed in the schools of rhetoric. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that he used the matter of Greek tragedies as themes for declamation. Something of the kind had been done before. Greek drama had supplied subjects for imaginary speeches. The *Heroides* of Ovid were presentations in epistolary form of pathetic situations mainly taken from the Greek stage. It was a short step to the handling of separate scenes such as is exemplified in all probability in the apparently fragmentary *Phænissae*. Finally whole plays were treated in this way.\* The *Medea* of Ovid, and perhaps the *Thyestes* of Varius, both lost, were specimens of this rhetorical drama. Moreover, Seneca's plays were in all probability written with a view to recitation. For tragedy had ceased to be commonly performed. Varius's *Thyestes* had indeed been produced at the games given to celebrate the victory of Actium. But there is no evidence that the plays† of Pomponius Secundus, known as a dramatist in the reign of Claudius, were ever placed upon the stage.

The influence of the rhetorical schools and the practice of recitation, already referred to in their effect on imperial literature at large (pp 368-371), was specially unfavourable in the sphere of drama, and it is conspicuous in the tragedies of Seneca, whether one looks at plot, character, or dialogue. What men learned in the schools was not to

\* Schanz, *Geschichte Rom. Lit.* II, Part 2, p 51

† There is a fragment of a play called *Æneas*, probably a *prætexta*. Ribbeck, *Trag. Rom. Frag.* p 268.

develop a plot, but to declaim on a situation, while the conditions of the recitation-room encouraged the elaboration of descriptive passages. The plays of Seneca present a series of situations, and the progression of the plot is frequently interrupted and sometimes marred by the introduction of ornamental digressions. The imaginary speeches of the rhetorical schools were mainly concerned with types (as, for instance, that of the tyrant) rather than definite personages, and the characters of Seneca are typical rather than individualised. Lycus (in the *Hercules Furens*) is the personification of tyranny, Detanira of jealousy, Phædra of lust, and Atreus of vindictive cruelty. In the plays of Seneca dialogue plays a less extended part than in his originals. It is used less for the development of the plot than for the criticism of a situation, and the pros and cons are stated with endless ingenuity. Each speaker takes up the other's words and turns them to his own purpose with unfailing cleverness. It is here that the cult of aphorism, dear to the schools of rhetoric, comes in. One generality is answered by another in a way which rouses amazement but settles nothing. The fact is the interlocutors speak not to convince but to show off. The dialogue of Seneca, it has been amusingly said, exhibits "the rhetoric of *scores* rather than of serious argument." \*

The exaggerated tone which pervades the plays is the outcome of the scholastic cult of emphasis. The very selection of models shows a desire to deal with subjects calculated to stimulate jaded and brutalised sensibilities. Two of them, *Phædra* and *Ædipus*, were chosen by Seneca for the very reason for which they had been avoided

\* A. D. Godley, "Senecan Drama" in *English Literature and the Classics*, p. 235.

by the older dramatists, namely, that they turned on incest. And the others—for instance, *Medea*, *Agamemnon*, *Thyestes*—are certainly strong plays. In his treatment Seneca tries to outdo his originals in every circumstance of horror. Jocasta is confronted with Œdipus after the revelation of the relationship between them, and kills herself in his presence. Medea butchers her children on the stage. The murder of Agamemnon is described by Cassandra in detail, while Theseus pieces together the mangled fragments of Hippolytus with little consideration for the sensibilities of his audience, or, it may be added, their sense of humour. In the *Thyestes*, above all, Atreus sets himself with deliberate devilry to break all records of even Pelopidean crime, revels in the consummation of his monstrous vengeance, and plays on an unspeakable situation with ingenuous and malignant wit.

Rhetorical in execution, the plays of Seneca are Stoical in spirit. In the choruses, which, shadowy and loosely connected with the action as they are, lend themselves readily to the expression of the author's individual views, Stoic principles are constantly proclaimed. The happiness of the passionless (*Thyestes*, 348), the unalterable succession of the fates (*Œdipus*, 980), the coming destruction of the universe (*Thyestes*, 830); such are some of the topics which supply matter for the chorus. So with the characters. It is in the principles of Stoicism that the calamitous find consolation, and in its language that they defy tyranny, protest indifference to suffering, and eulogise suicide. Moreover, seeing that they are drawn on an heroic scale, the Stoicism which they profess is of a peculiarly hard and inhuman type. This is a circumstance prejudicial to pathos, for it is difficult to pity those who feel no pity for themselves.



It will be seen, then, that there is little of the harmony, the moderation, the broad humanity—above all, little of the beauty of the Greek drama—in these Neronian travesties. Nor are they commended by their metre. The iambs of Seneca, far stricter in construction than those of the old Latin tragedians,\* are rendered monotonous by the constant coincidence of the pauses with the end of the line, or the occurrence of the cæsura in the middle of the third foot. The classic songs are metrically even more monotonous. Without strophic arrangement,† they present long tracts of anapæsts, glyconics, asclepiads, or eleven-syllabled sapphics, unvaried or varied for the most part only at long and capricious intervals by the shorter lines which elsewhere contribute to diversity of those metres. In the choric songs of two plays, *Agamemnon* and *Œdipus*, an attempt has been made to reproduce the metrical richness of Hellenic lyric; but the attempt is not successful. Their random combinations and variations of Horatian metres make no intelligible appeal to the ear, and suggest nothing so much as Horace gone mad.

Yet beauty there is in passages of those choric songs, though, as it happens, the most notable examples are supplied by a single play. Early in the *Hercules Furens* (125), the chorus sings with charm of the coming of the dawn and the renewal of the activities of simple folk; later it visualises in striking lines the mournful procession of those who go down to the grave, and asks, with a

Seneca employs only spondees or anapæsts in the 5th foot

† Prof. Leo (*Rheinisches Museum*, vol. 52, p. 509 ff) has shown that in the abandonment of strophic arrangement Seneca is following out a development initiated in the Euripidean monody, traceable in fragments of Hellenistic choric songs, and reflected in the Plautine cantica

natural shrinking from death, which is in strong contrast to the stoic indifference elsewhere professed :

*What are your thoughts when the light  
Is extinguished, and each man feels  
Whelmed 'neath the weight of the earth ?  
Herc Fur 858*

and finally (1063), when the hero sinks into slumber, it utters that long invocation to sleep which Shakespeare has turned to so good an account in *Macbeth*.

Moreover, Seneca is not always proud and exaggerated. In the lines in which Agamemnon urges on Pyrrhus that the lesson of success is moderation, we recognise the sobriety and the humanity of the moral treatises. Agamemnon admits that there was a time when he had been arrogant ;

*But that old pride is broken now by what  
In others had inspired it, Fortune's kindness.  
Troades, 267*

Andromache bids the Trojan captors cease from vain complainings in words which breathe a dignified if melancholy resignation.

*Our woes are light  
If not too deep for tears But yesterday  
Fell Troy for you. For me long since it fell,  
That day on which Pelides' cruel car  
Dragged the dear limbs which were in truth mine own,  
And groaned beneath the weight of Hector dead.  
Then was I crushed, overthrown - and now endure  
What comes with spirit numb, to grief inured  
Ibid. 409.*

In the great scene in which Phædra, confronted with Hippolytus, is made by the art of the tragedian to find fuel for her passion in her stepson's innocent words, until finally putting her fortune to the trial, she makes her

avowal and appeal—"pity me. I love you!" (*miserere amanti*) there is no overstrain of expression, and if Hippolytus, in his furious outburst of indignation, is frankly declamatory, yet here declamation is not out of place.

These are exceptions. The prevailing note is that of bombast. Seneca's desperate emphasis gained him the ear of after ages, though there is no reason to suppose that in the age of declamation it won any particular attention for his plays. It has been said that "no classical writer is so important in the history of modern drama."\* Jonson in England, Alfieri in Italy, Corneille and Racine in France bear witness to his influence, which, transient with us but enduring in the Latin countries, has, wherever felt, shown itself in the predominance in tragedy of declamatory rhetoric.

The *Octavia* found among the MSS. of Seneca's plays, but not written by him, is interesting as the sole surviving example of a Roman historical play, but not otherwise. The divorce and banishment of the daughter of Claudius are effected too easily to provide matter for drama. Octavia herself is a pathetic but uninteresting figure. The play consists of speeches punctuated by laments from a sympathetic chorus. The dialogue in the scene in which Seneca counsels moderation, while Nero insists on the exercise of his despotic power, recalls the *de Clementia*, but the treatment throughout, if far more natural, is infinitely less clever than in the undoubtedly Senecan plays.

We have seen the rhetorician as an historian in Curtius, as a moralist in Seneca. It remains to see him as a poet. Son of the youngest of the three sons of Seneca the rhetorician, MARCUS ANNÆUS LUCANUS (A.D. 39-65), was

\* A. D. Godley, *op. cit.*, p. 244

brought from Cordova to Rome (A.D. 40) to receive the best education that the age could offer, and profit by the supervision of his uncle Seneca the philosopher. The latter part of the programme was frustrated by Seneca's exile (A.D. 41), but the former was carried out. Lucan learned rhetoric probably from Remmius Palæmon, philosophy certainly from Cornutus the Stoic, who had inspired such affection in Persius. Rivalling his teachers and surpassing his fellow-pupils he declaimed and wrote, and a considerable list of productions testifies to his youthful fertility. He attracted the attention and was admitted to the circle of Nero. At the first literary festival (*Neronia* A.D. 60) celebrated by the Emperor, Lucan recited a panegyric upon him. Probably a year later he was advanced to the quæstorship before the legal date. But a quarrel arose between poet and emperor on literary grounds, and the latter revenged himself by forbidding his rival to publish or recite. Lucan went into retirement and occupied himself with the epic of which he had already completed three books. But it seemed as if his only chance of achieving the fame which his early years had promised lay in the Emperor's death. An opportunity of bringing this about offered itself in the conspiracy of Piso (A.D. 65). Lucan threw himself into this undertaking and became one of the ringleaders. The conspiracy was detected. The poet attempted to save his life by informing against his mother but in vain. He opened his veins, and died reciting some lines of his own in which he had described a soldier bleeding to death.

That he left his epic unfinished is evident. It contains promises which are not fulfilled, and the last book, which is half the length of that which precedes it, ends abruptly.

Its intended scope cannot be determined with certainty. The title given in the best MSS. and implied by Petronius\* is not *Pharsalia*, but *The Civil War*, and the former, which is the traditional title, is possibly due to a false inference from the poet's declaration (ix. 985), "My *Pharsalia* shall live." For Lucan may have used the name merely with reference to the fact that the battle of *Pharsalia* was the most important episode in the poem. Nor is the title a suitable one, for, unfinished as it is, the epic is carried on beyond the point at which it would have been concluded had the author conceived of its subject as the struggle between Cæsar and Pompey. Pompey's death is told in the eighth book, and if it is only at the close of the ninth, which is mainly occupied with the exploits of Cato, that Cæsar reaches Egypt and is there presented with his rival's head, this is the last book which could fitly have been included in the plan of a *Pharsalia*. In the tenth book a fresh start is made. This book is concerned with the doings of Cæsar in Egypt, and breaks off in the midst of the difficulties in which he is involved by his advocacy of the cause of Cleopatra.

Among the passages which anticipate events not reached in the poem, but perhaps intended to be included in it, is Lucan's apostrophe to Brutus, who is seeking Cæsar on the field of *Pharsalia* :

*Nay, let him live, and reign—to fall hereafter*  
*Victim of Brutus.* vii 596

It is an attractive conjecture that the event foreshadowed was included in the design of the poem, and that the drama which began with the passage of the Rubicon was meant to end in the Senate house on the Ides of March.

\* *Satiricon*, § 118.

It would thus have exhibited not only the achievement but the penalty of despotism—*le crime et le châtement*.

Further light on the intended scope of the poem, and, incidentally, illustration of the change of tone observable in the later books, is given by the indications of a duplicated introduction.\* The first seven lines refer only to the struggle between Pompey and Cæsar, which is spoken of as a crime. The next fifty-eight lines refer to Pharsalia too, but also to a number of episodes in the renewed civil war, including the battle of Actium. These are represented as regrettable, but mainly because they have delayed the world-wide dominion of Rome, and as even welcome if the indispensable precursors of the reign of Nero. It is stated in one MS. that the first seven lines were introduced by Seneca. Several circumstances combine to make the name Seneca here suspect, and there is plausibility in the conjecture that the introduction of these lines was due not to Seneca, who predeceased Lucan, but to the poet's father, Annæus Mela, who, as Suetonius says, was entrusted by him at his death with the task of making some corrections in the poem. If this be correct, lines 8-66 are to be regarded as the introduction to the epic as originally planned, and lines 1-7 as a revised introduction suited to its scope as left by Lucan, and to his later feelings towards Nero. Even so, however, there is no necessity to suppose that Lucan intended to carry his narrative further than the death of Cæsar, for the battle of Munda is referred to as the "final" † conflict in the struggle of which Pharsalia was

\* Plessis, *Poésie Latine*, p. 554

† *Ultima funesta concurrent prælia Munda* (i 40). Similarly when anticipating the events which are to signalise the struggle as continued after Pompey's death Lucan mentions Thapsus, Munda, and the blood to be shed at Alexandria, but nothing later (vii 691).

the turning-point, and the subsequent events may be enumerated merely as completing the list of the horrors through which the establishment of the Empire had been reached.\*

In writing an epic on recent history, and in discarding the use of celestial machinery, Lucan made a new departure; and there are indications that both choice and handling of subject were criticised by his contemporaries. One of Petronius' characters is made to deprecate the treatment of historical events in epic. "The historians," he says, "do it better." He proceeds to give an improved version of the matter of the first three books of the *Pharsalia*, with a liberal use of personification and free recourse to the agency of heaven. It may be admitted that recent history does not supply the most suitable subjects for epic; but having chosen such a subject, Lucan was surely right to deal with it as he did. Why should he have invoked the operation of Mars to account for the action of Cæsar when his motives were patent without it? And why should he have introduced deities in which neither he nor his readers nor his characters believed, instead of conceptions such as Destiny and Chance, and superstitions such as those relating to portents or witchcraft, in which they did?

Right or wrong, he treats his matter on historical lines. He announces at the outset: "I am moved to set forth the causes of these mighty events," and the analysis which follows might have been written by Sallust; indeed, it was in part probably drawn from him. With the notable exception that he represents Cicero as present in the camp before Pharsalia, and as urging Pompey to fight,

\* Plessis, *Poésie Latine*, who, however, thinks (p. 559) that Lucan intended to go as far as the battle of Actium

Lucan's narrative of events does not diverge from that of the historians.

In his presentation of characters he is less accurate. While his comparison of Pompey and Cæsar in the opening book (i. 129-150) is as just as it is vivid, in the sequel he embellishes the character of Pompey, exerting himself not merely to conciliate sympathy for him in his disasters, but to represent him as the self-sacrificing champion of the Senate, while Cæsar he depicts as a monster rejoicing in the spectacle of carnage (vii. 794), and shedding hypocritical tears over the severed head of his rival (ix. 1038).

Yet Pompey is reduced to his true proportions in the balanced judgment of him by Cato (ix. 190-206); and Lucan, despite some gleams of sinister light cast upon Cæsar, does not depreciate him to the extent of depriving him of his high supremacy. Energetic, self-confident, commanding, he dominates the poem. Similarly with Cato. On Cato Lucan has lavished all his art, because he was not merely a stalwart champion of the free state, but represented the nearest known approximation to the Stoic ideal, which is indeed exactly summarised in his characterisation of Cato.

*Such was the mind and such the unbending rule  
Of Cato stern, the mean, the now, to keep,  
To follow Nature, and for country die,  
Nor think life given for self, but all the world*

ii 380-3

Nevertheless, though he extols the endurance and self-sacrifice shown by Cato on the desert march, he has obviously no thought of so far violating history as to make him the hero of a conflict in which he plays a relatively unimportant part.



Pompey is dignified and pathetic, but not heroic, and with Cæsar the part of hero is excluded by that of villain. The subject of the poem is the conflict between "the pair for ever matched, Freedom and Cæsar ;" \* and though at first it is in part a personal conflict between Cæsar and Pompey (*uter imperet orbi*), on Pompey's death it became wholly a conflict of principle. After the fall of the first champion it is carried on yet more unequivocally † by the second, Cato, and after he too has fallen, and the last hope of the Pompeians seemingly extinguished at Munda, it may be surmised that it is taken up and carried to a temporarily successful conclusion by "the Senate's final hope," ‡ Brutus.

If in his narration of events, and to a less extent in his presentation of characters, Lucan adheres on the whole to history, there is little of the sobriety commonly associated with historical writing in his manner. All that happens is on a stupendous and unexampled scale, and all that is said is heightened by the rhetorician's art. Lucan has the faults due to the education and the influences of his day, but from the intensity of his nature and the keenness of his literary ambition he exhibits them in their extreme form. Taught to amplify, he overloaded his description with detail, and exhausted each topic in enumerations from which nothing is omitted. Urged to emphasise, he staggered his audiences with a riot of hyperbole. Encouraged to cultivate point, he filled his poem with antitheses, sometimes effective,

vii 695.

† *Totæ post Magni funera partes*  
*Isbertatis erant* (ix 27)

‡ vii. 587.

but often strained, and epigrams which, brilliant as they sometimes are, were justly deprecated by a contemporary critic as standing out unduly from the texture of his verse. Of the "plague of catalogues" from which the *Pharsalia* suffers it is needless to multiply instances. Perhaps the most absurd is the list of Libyan snakes which assailed the army of Cato on its road across the desert. Each causes death in a manner appropriate to its name and nature, and is dismissed with an epigram to make way for a successor.

Thus one soldier vanishes away completely. This is the result of a bite from the *seps*, or putrefier, which is thus apostrophised by the poet :

*Of all Cinyphian plagues most noxious you,  
For all take life, you only body too*

ix 787.

while a victim of the *prester*, or inflammatory serpent, swells and swells, and is finally abandoned by his horrified comrades, swelling still. To hyperbole there is in Lucan neither end nor limit. The fishing-boat in which Cæsar braved a storm in the Adriatic touches alternately the clouds with its sails and the sea bottom with its keel. The armour of Scæva, the heroic centurion who holds up the Pompeian army in the assault of the lines at Dyrrachium, is shattered by a hail of blows, and "his exposed vitals are protected by nothing but the missiles sticking in his bones."

In the speeches, again, with which the narrative is constantly diversified, the influence of the "deliberative oration" (*suasoria*) of the schools is but too apparent. Generally eloquent, they are too theatrical and too ingenious in the diversity of argument and appeal.

When Cæsar, addressing his troops before the battle of Pharsalia, declares :

*When quivering darts athwart the sky are whirled  
Well shall I know whose arm each missile hurled.*

vii. 289.

he is surely trying their credulity rather high. Excessive ingenuity is injurious to pathetic effect. Cornelia, just recovered from a swoon into which she has been thrown by the shock of learning that she must part from her husband, protests against his decision with elaborate irony and far-fetched arguments, and later, as the agonised witness of his murder, she fills the air not only with lamentable complaints, which is natural enough, but with appeals to friend or foe to turn their swords against herself, which become constantly more intricate and forced until the moment of her final collapse.

In narrative, the special province of the epic poet, Lucan is weak ; he is for ever interrupting the action in order to explain its significance or give utterance to his own emotion. Political reflections, however, have their place in a political poem. More gratuitous are digressions on the geography of Gaul, Thessaly, and Libya, on the fate of Antæus, Thessalian witches, or the Delphic oracle. Interest in science is not surprising in the nephew of the author of "Enquiries about Nature," but it is surprising that Pompey, flying from Lesbos to Alexandria, should have been willing to listen to a lecture about astronomy from his pilot, or Cæsar in the midst of his anxieties in Egypt to a disquisition on the sources of the Nile. But enough of Lucan's shortcomings. Let us turn to his merits.

Rare touches reveal that with the ingenuity of the

rhetorician and the fervour of the declaimer Lucan had something of the vision and the feeling of the poet. There is for instance the picture of Pompey looking back on Italy while all but he gaze eastwards, and watching the mountains of his native land which he was not to see again fade into the mist (iii. 1-7).

There is the line which tells how the stars at dawn grow pale

*And mingle with the stainless face of heaven,*

II 723.

and surprises us to find that Lucan and Wordsworth have a point in common. And there is that fine contrast between the furious passions of men and the calm of nature in the passage which describes how Vulteius' desperate fight against overwhelming odds was interrupted

*Black night*

*Hid the dim day and brought with darkness peace*

IV 473

But on the whole Lucan has nothing of the glamour that Virgil sheds over whatever he touches. In him all is loud, insistent, and hard. And as his poetry so his verse. Weighty and resonant, it is an admirable vehicle for declamation; but it has no secrets and no surprises, and the sparing use of elision, the constant recurrence of favourite pauses, a want of variety in the rhythm, and a sameness in the arrangement of words in the line combine to make it definitely monotonous.

Lucan's merits are those of the orator and they are incontestable. Passages of powerful rhetoric and bitter satire, the very splendour of which blinds us to their exaggerations, deplore the irreparable losses incurred on Pharsalia's stricken field, or thunder against a despotism which was felt to be degrading (vii. 387-459). Effective

too is the contrast between the roll of Pompey's exploits and his humble grave (viii. 806-22).

Along with his ardour and his spirit Quintilian has singled out for praise Lucan's brilliance in apophthegms (*sententiae*). These are in fact a notable feature of his writing. Here is the opening of the speech in which Pothinus urges the young Ptolemy to turn against the fallen Pompey,

*'I roth before men and gods,' the villain said,  
'Oft brings guilt's guerdon on the guiltless head  
In helping Fortune's victims honour nice  
May win the glory, but she pays the price  
Best, Sir, to back the gods and Fate's decree,  
And court the lucky—let the fallen be  
As stars from earth, as fire from ocean tides,  
A gulf the right from interest divides  
Doomed is the throne where conscience weighs the just,  
And moral dues lay palaces in dust.  
Fire play for crime, the murderous sword unchecked,  
Maintain the realms that hatred else had wrecked  
The bloody deed its own safe conduct brings,  
Go ye that scruple, quit the courts of kings '<sup>1</sup>  
He lives in fear that shrinks from murder done  
Goodness and tyrant power can never meet in one*

viii 484-495

Isolated apophthegms might be instanced more striking and more familiar than those which occur above, but the passage translated, itself no bad specimen of Lucan's antithetic style, exhibits a succession of them. In Lucan's general sentiments the form is neat, but the thought is often commonplace. The most interesting are those which express his characteristic pessimism.

\* I owe this translation to the kindness of Mr. Heitland, to whose introduction to Mr. Haskins' Lucan I am, as will have been evident much indebted.

*Heaven hides from men, who else might ill endure  
the doom of life, that it is blest to die :*

iv. 519

or his political point of view,

*Men forget*

*That swords were given that slavery none need know*

iv. 579

Lucan is better remembered for his characterisations, of which those on Cæsar, Pompey, and Cato have already been mentioned, and for certain memorable lines making particular statements (so that they are not strictly speaking *sententiæ*) in a weighty and pointed form. Such is the verse which has placed on record for ever the fateful issue of Curio's change of sides,\* and such the superb tribute which seems to pit Justice, as embodied in Cato, against the supreme arbiters of human destiny

*The gods the victors he the vanquished chose †*

Born at Volaterræ, in Etruria, five years earlier than Lucan, AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS (34-62 A.D.) died three years before him. Unlike Seneca or Lucan he knew neither the friendship nor the enmity of the tyrant. Losing his father when he was six years old he lived much in the society of women—his mother, his sister and his aunt. Stoic influences predominated with him, for of the fashionable teachers by whom he was instructed it was the Stoic Cornutus alone who greatly impressed him. Placed under Cornutus when he was sixteen he never afterwards left him; and he has paid a warm tribute to his teacher in his Fifth Satire. He had Stoic connections, too, for he was cousin to Arria wife of Prætus Thræsea. The friendship of the latter he

\* *Momentumque fuit mutatus Curio rerum*

† Dryden. The original is *Victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni* (l. 128).

enjoyed for the last ten years of his life sometimes joining him in travels, of which an unpublished itinerary poem (ὁδοιπορικὴ) may have contained a record. Of men of letters he knew the lyric poet Cæsius Bassus, addressed by him in his Sixth Satire, who published Persius' poems after his death; Lucan who greatly admired his poetry; and, late in life, Seneca, by whom he was not attracted.

So he lived with his mother, his sister, and his aunt, now travelling with his kinsman Thræsea, now wintering on the Italian Riviera, consorting with men of letters, such as the lyric poet Cæsius Bassus, but still more with philosophic friends, Cornutus and Cornutus' friends, the "keen philosophers," the Laconian physician and Aristocrates the Magnesian, and writing seldom and slowly. He died of some gastric complaint (62 A D) at his villa on the Appian Road, leaving a considerable property to his nearest female relations, and his library, comprising a complete collection of Stoic books, to Cornutus. His writings were prepared for publication by Cornutus (who suppressed his *Juvenilia* and made some slight corrections in his *Satires*), and published by Cæsius Bassus. They only amounted to six satires, for though in a fit of admiration for Lucilius he had begun to compose the Satires soon after he had passed out of the hands of his teachers he worked "seldom and slowly."

Persius' satires are something very different from the full blooded and catholic outpourings of Lucilius or the urbane and ironic essays of Horace. They have been described not incorrectly as sermons on Stoic texts. The third and fourth of them emphasise the importance of being earnest, the second and fifth respectively set forth the nature of true religion and true freedom, the sixth

indicates the right use of wealth. If the subject of the first satire is on the face of it literary, yet the vicious literary taste of the day is clearly connected with its corrupt morality. The point of view taken up throughout is the Stoic. Stoic principles, such as the absolute polarity of right and wrong, are constantly invoked; Stoic maxims, such as that addressed to the "not wise," "stir but a finger and you sin" (v. 119), constantly cited; while the remedy for random living is to put to one's self the Stoic question, "What is your place in the system of things?" (iii. 66).

It is only necessary to compare the satires in which Horace and Persius treat the same thesis\*—that normal man, though legally, is not morally free—in order to realise the difference between them both in their tone and in their attitude to Stoicism. Horace is personal and humorous at his own expense. Persius chops logic solemnly with a shadowy personality. Horace implies that there is some sense in Stoicism despite its ridiculous paradoxes; Persius insists that Stoicism provides the way, and the only way, of salvation.

The weak point about Persius is that he is wanting in the indispensable requisite of the satirist—knowledge of mankind. Neither in the narrow literary and philosophic circle in which he sharpened his wits, nor in the feminine interior in which he found scope for his affections,† was he likely to acquire it. He applied a high standard of morality to a world which he did not know, and perhaps imagined more wicked than it was. Of Horace's genial tolerance for the weaknesses of mankind he has none. At

\* Persius v, Hor ii 7

† *Fuit pietatis erga matrem et sororem et amitam exemplo sufficientis.*  
*Vit. Probr.*



the sametime an heroic determination not to mince matters results on occasion in a startling coarseness of detail.

With the world of letters on the other hand Persius was familiar, and this is why his first satire stands apart from the rest. It supplies interesting evidence as to the state of literature in his day, and its descriptions are graphic and convincing. In it he appears as the opponent of the literary fashions of the Neronian age, of its sentimental poems about mythological ladies in the Ovidian manner,\* of its smoothness of versification, sacrificing sense to sound, in comparison with which Virgil himself seemed rough, of its rhetorical brilliancy and its passion for applause which were carried into the very law courts. The pictures of its effeminate declaimers, the beringed and white-clad reciter in the public hall (l. 15), the fop in hyacinthine mantle at a banquet of the *jeunesse dorée* (l. 32), are drawn from life. But in the exhortation to a Roman Alcibiades (s. iv) to fit himself for a public life which in the days of Nero was non-existent we seem to be no longer in touch with reality.

Yet if Persius has neither the *bouhonne* nor the knowledge of life displayed by Horace, in earnestness and moral elevation he goes far beyond him. There is nothing so impressive in Horace as Persius' description of the torments of hopeless remorse :

*Great sire of gods,  
Be it thy will fell tyrants to chastise  
Not otherwise than this, when dreadful lust  
In fiery venom steeped hath wrought within,  
Let them see Virtue's face, and pine away  
For grief that they have left her †*

III. 35

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\* Phyllidas *Hyphistylas vatam et plorabile siquid* (l. 34).

† *Virtutem vidcant intabescantque relicta*.

## ELEVATION AND OBSCURITY OF PERSIUS 421

Nor does Horace rise to the moral heights attained by Persius where he indicates the offering which heaven will not reject :

*Nay, let us bring the gods  
What great Messalla's blear-eyed progeny,  
For all his lordly salver, cannot bring  
Justice and piety within the soul  
Blended aright, pure thoughts in inmost mind,  
A breast with inbred righteousness imbued.*

11 71.

When Persius asks the priests to tell him what is the use of gold within the holy place he reminds us of the Hebrew prophet, and when he protests against drawing inferences for the cravings of "sinful flesh" we seem to hear the voice of the Christian moralist

But Persius' serious meaning is veiled by a repellent obscurity. This is due in part to the abruptness of his style and his neglect of transitions. Big with some message he ejaculates early in the opening satire, "The world of Rome" !—and then breaks off. Not till after more than a hundred lines of dialogue and description does he complete his sentence—"The world of Rome's an ass!"—and invite an audience fit but few to share the secret he has discovered. In the fifth satire a eulogy of Cornutus is followed by an argument, largely conducted in dialogue, aimed at convincing a lately emancipated slave that though legally he is not morally free. What the connection between the eulogy and the argument may be—whether, for instance, Persius is honouring his teacher by presenting a contrasted picture of an unregenerate mind, or by exhibiting Cornutus' dialectical methods in operation—remains a matter of conjecture. Not a little of Persius' obscurity is due to his unskilful use of the expedient, traditional in satire, of dialogue. He is constantly break-

ing into dialogue ; but who the other party may be he does not specify and perhaps does not always clearly conceive. Such vagueness he admits himself where he passes from dialogue to exposition with the remark—

*Whoever you my late opponent be,*

I 44.

Partly in consequence of the indefiniteness of the parties there is a recurrent difficulty in the distribution of the parts. Everywhere there is the difficulty of language and style. It is not in merely that Persius' diction is unusual. Colloquialisms such as that in the secret prayer of the ostensible applicant for a sound mind and a good reputation, "O that my uncle would pop off" (*ebulliat*) are engaging ; nor do we complain when confronted with such unfamiliar objects as a "squab noggin" (*sessilis obba*). But he constantly uses expressions which are forced and unnatural. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his Horatian borrowings. For what Horace has said simply and naturally Persius reproduces in a bizarre and contorted form. Horace's

*wouldst have me weep, thou first must grieve thyself.*

A P 102

reappears in Persius as

*wrung from the heart, not studied overnight*

*must be his moan who'd bow me with his woes*

I 91.

In Horace scandalised elders are imagined as declaring that shame is dead ; in Persius an outraged goddess protests that "the world has lost her forehead" Horace's words speak for themselves ; those of Persius must be explained as meaning that that part of the person where shame hangs out her flag—in other words, the where-withal to blush—is lost.

The question of Persius's relation to Horace is indeed of special interest. Though he is stated to have been inspired to write satires by reading Lucilius, it is Horace whom he has most closely studied. His admiration of him is discerning. No one has described more happily Horace's satiric methods, so different from his own, his *bonhomie*, his disarming approach, his mocking humour. To Horace he looks for that knowledge of men and things in which he is deficient himself. He introduces Horatian personages more freely than Horace before him had introduced those of Lucilius, and of Horatian expressions he constantly makes use. But they are distorted almost past recognition.

It has been suggested that he aimed at outdoing Horace; and that here we have yet another instance of the ambition of the Neronian age. This is unlikely, if only because passages not due to Horace exhibit just the same strained unnaturalness as has been imported into his Horatian reproductions. For instance to disabuse of antiquated notions is in Persius "to pull old grandmothers out of the lungs." No method of expression could be more surprising; but it is Persius's own. Persius wrote, then, in this extraordinary fashion because he was moved to do so. Intensely serious, he is filled with a shocked annoyance at the blindness and frivolity of the world. This temper issues in abruptness, while his serious purpose inclines him, like a sensational preacher, to adopt language which will attract attention. He has been compared with a modern writer with whom earnestness found expression in eccentricity of style. Along with a picturesque imagination and a desire to assert himself, dyspepsia had something to do with the phenomenon of Carlyle's peculiar manner. It may seem

frivolous to recall the fact that Persius was a valetudinarian, and died from a disease of the stomach. There were other less conjectural influences. That he was over-educated, and restricted to a circle to which Stoic jargon was familiar accounts for his falling into a manner which is neither broad nor popular. And, while he protested against the frivolity and rhetorical affectation then in fashion, he was himself trained in the school which could enunciate the fatuous advice "darken your meaning" (*σκοτίσθον*), and under another form exemplified the feverish strain of the Neronian era, which was unable to say a plain thing in a plain way. Yet when the tension is relaxed, and he is recalling some childish reminiscence (i 43) or giving utterance to the affection which was part of his nature (v. 30), Persius can be almost natural. And when strong conviction and moral fervour eliminate personal feeling and render striving for effect superfluous (iii. 35ff., ii. 71ff.) he can add to simplicity impressiveness.

Such a picture as that of the glutton's death (iii. 100-106) has hardly been surpassed by Juvenal. Along with grotesque\* there are extremely graphic metaphors, such as "ghastly inward pallor," or that in which we see the lost creature as "submerged" and "no longer making any bubbles on the surface" (iii 33) Here and there a maxim such as "meet the disease before it comes," (*venienti occurrere morbo* iii. 64) or an apophthegm such as

*live by yourself and you will find  
how poorly furnished is your mind,*  
iv 52 †

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\* Such as "his heart is overgrown with thick collops of fat" (iii 34), "chunks of solid poetry" (iii. 5)

† *Tecum habita, noris quam sit tibi curta supellex*

reveal in Persius the faculty of expressing practical wisdom in pithy words.

The fourth great writer of Neronian times was neither Stoic nor rhetorician, and he offers a striking contrast to the other three. In the *Satiricon* of GAIUS PETRONIUS ARBITER one need not look to find either the elegances of Seneca, the bombast of Lucan, or the precocious earnestness of Persius.

Of Petronius Tacitus has drawn an unforgettable picture :\* "He passed his days in sleep, his nights in the duties and recreations of life. Others had achieved greatness by their exertions, but he had idled into fame. For he was not, like most spendthrifts, regarded as a debauchee or a wastrel, but rather as a savant in luxury. All his works and acts were hailed with delight, for they showed a freedom and an absence of self-consciousness which gave them the appearance of complete simplicity. Yet as proconsul of Bithynia, and later as consul, he showed himself an energetic and capable man of affairs. Then came a revulsion. Vices, genuine or assumed, gained him admission to the inner circle of Nero. He became the Emperor's arbiter of taste, and no pleasure was charming, no extravagance refined, unless Petronius had set the seal of his approval upon it." His successes provoked the jealousy of Sejanus, who accused him of complicity in the Pisonian conspiracy. Petronius was ordered to die, and did so with a genuine nonchalance which was in complete contrast to the theatrical exits of the Stoic martyrs. "He listened to no disquisitions on the immortality of the soul or the dogmas of philosophy, but to frivolous songs and playful verses."† Of his slaves he rewarded some and chastised others. Among those

\* Tac. *A.* xvi. 18

† Tac. *A.* xvi. 19

who felt his resentment was Nero. Petronius's will contained a schedule of Nero's enormities, with the names of the persons concerned. This he sealed and sent to the Emperor, afterwards destroying the seal that it might not be used to incriminate others.

The title, *Satyricon*, borne by Petronius's work (which is, of course, not to be identified with the document just mentioned) implies that it was of the nature of the *satura*, that is to say that it had no formal plot, and was written both in prose and verse. In this respect it resembled the Menippean Satires of Varro, and Seneca's skit on Claudius. But it was longer than these. It presented a succession of scenes or episodes, while Varro's satires presented only one. We possess only excerpts from two books out of sixteen, and these run to about one hundred and fifty octavo pages. The *Satyricon* stood in some relation too to the Milesian tales, the Greek romances translated by Sisenna and referred to by Ovid. It is possible that a slight thread of connection runs through the several episodes, in the wrath of Priapus by which the hero is pursued; at any rate they represent in the main the adventures of the latter. Thus the *Satyricon* is the prototype of such novels as *Gil Blas* or *Roderick Random*. The leading character just referred to is Encolpius, a Greek freedman, a person of some education but no morals and an embarrassing past. He is in the company of Ascyltos, who resembles him in character, but is coarser and more contentious, and a boy, Giton, whose morality is in inverse proportion to his good looks. At the beginning of the fragments the scene of the story, which perhaps opened at Massilia, is Cumæ. Encolpius, declaiming against the education of the day, is interrupted by Agamemnon, a teacher of rhetoric, who

explains that responsibility for its failings rests with the parents. After a series of unmentionable adventures in indescribable haunts Encolpius and his two friends reappear in comparatively high society as the guests, introduced by Agamemnon, of Trimalchio, an immensely wealthy freedman. Then comes a realistic description of an ostentatious, elaborate, and incredibly senseless entertainment, dominated by Trimalchio, the type of the self-satisfied and ignorant plutocrat, which is prolonged in a crescendo of extravagances until the three gladly take an opportunity to escape. Discomfited in a quarrel with Ascyrtos over Giton, Encolpius falls in with a grotesque old poet Eumolpus, who, from this point plays a conspicuous part in the story. With him, the three friends, now reconciled, embark on a ship, but find to their dismay that it belongs to Lichas their implacable foe—for it seems that earlier in the story Encolpius had robbed him and seduced his wife—while also on board is Tryphæna, a courtesan who has some claim on Giton. Desperate expedients to avoid detection, a battle royal on deck, and a patched up peace are followed by a storm in which Lichas is drowned, while Eumolpus and the three friends are cast ashore near Croton. It is, they learn, a city in which the whole population is engaged in courting others, or being courted, with a view to legacies. This suits the adventurers well. Eumolpus gives himself out as a childless millionaire in weak health, while the other three represent the attendants to which the recent storm had reduced his suite. So they live in clover, though with hints of impending trouble. At the close we see Encolpius prosecuting an unsuccessful amour with a houri named Chrysis, and Eumolpus playing on the credulity of the will hunters with ever-increasing daring.



The *Satyricon* exhibits precisely the qualities which Tacitus noted in its author. It is marked by complete indifference to decorum and at the same time by wit, humour, and a learned literary taste. If the question be asked why a man of culture should have dragged his readers into the vilest haunts and plumbed the abysses of depravity, the answer must be that however extended his intellectual range Petronius was a sensualist. Among his poems not included in the *Satyricon* are some which indicate a reaction from sensuality ; yet it is very unlikely that he wrote with the moral purpose of provoking a similar reaction in his readers. He was the intimate of Nero, who sought entertainment and adventure in the slums, and the contemplation of depravity carried to its limit had the same kind of fascination for the voluptuary as the rudimentary philosophy and the linguistic barbarisms of the lower orders for the humorist and the scholar. In the portrayal of the common folk Petronius takes a Shakspearian delight and shows a Shakspearian sureness of touch. Its emphasising of the obvious, its complacent iteration of platitude, its inane moralising : "there's ups and downs, as the farmer said when he lost his spotted pig"—its homely aphorisms : "a hot drink is as good as an overcoat"—its fortuitously humorous illustrations : "this town is growing downwards, like a calf's tail"—are given to the life. The language is as true to reality as the manner of thinking. The plebeian speech which Petronius puts into the mouths of his low life characters, with its fluent Billingsgate, its slang terms,\* its fine disregard of gender,† its onomatopœic coinages,‡ and (a special feature in the argot of the

\* Instances are *Apoculamus*, "skedaddle" (c. 62)

† *Caelus* (c. 39), *fatus* (c. 42)

‡ *Agaga* (c. 69).

Hellenic seaports in which the action largely moves) its Greek transliterations,\* are in marked contrast to the facile if colloquial Latin used in the narrative by the educated speakers, and still more to the polished poetic diction of the fragments of verse.

The social satire of Petronius is in the main aristocratic ridicule of the bourgeois, as exemplified in the freedman newly risen to wealth, but for ever excluded from culture by low traditions and low ideals. It is not unkindly—Trimalchio, for all his vulgarity, is not a bad fellow—but it overflows with amused contempt. On the unscrupulous greed in which he saw the poison of society Petronius is more severe. Eumolpus whets the eagerness and experiments on the credulity of his prospective heirs by the proviso that to succeed to his property they must eat his body, and observes "I am not afraid of your stomach turning. . . . Just shut your eyes and imagine that you have eaten, not human flesh, but a solid million." Here satire is drastic to brutality. It is none the less serious that it is put into the mouths of an unprincipled adventurer and a grotesque old poetaster.

In the literary, which alternates with the social, criticism in the *Satyricon* Petronius appears as a conservative and a classicist. He inveighs against the abuse of rhetorical studies, unknown to the great writers of antiquity, which had emasculated the language and silenced eloquence. The admirer of Homer, the Lyric poets, "Roman Virgil," and Horace, who "achieved felicity by taking trouble," † it is clear that he has Lucan's epic in his mind when he

\* Saplutus, topanta (c. 37) These instances are given in Dr Rouse's trans. of Petronius (Loeb Library), Introd. xiv.

† *Horatius curiosa felicitas* (c. 118).

insists on the necessity of a distinctively poetic diction, protests against the confusion of history and poetry, and deprecates the cult of obtrusive epigram. The longest metrical effort in the book, in which the three books of the *Pharsalia* are re-written in brief, with a liberal use of personification and celestial machinery, does little to reinforce contentions of which some are sound enough. The other poems by which the novel is diversified, the most important being a version of the opening of the second *Æneid* in iambs, though the polished productions of a man evidently steeped in good literature, are without inspiration. A higher level is reached in some poems not included in the *Satyricon*, but with great probability attributed to Petronius\*. By far the most brilliant as literature is a short elegiac poem† which describes love's votary roused from sleep and driven on aimless nocturnal wanderings by the strong influence of the god. But of special interest, as revealing the better side of one who was at pains to parade the worse, are the lines which speak a passionate love for the country as the scene of the simple life, or as endeared by happy memories,‡ and a conception of love divorced from grossness and refined by sentiment.§

It is probable that the didactic poem entitled *Ætna* belongs to the Neronian age, and possible that it came from the pen of Seneca's correspondent Lucilius. Although it is attributed to Virgil by Servius, and Donatus who notices that this attribution was disputed, and included in the MSS. to which we owe the appendix *Virgiliana*, it is generally agreed that it cannot be by Virgil.

\* *Post-Augustan Poetry*, H. E. Butler, pp. 134 ff.

† Baehrens, *Poeta Latini minores*, 99

‡ *Ibid* 81, 84

§ *Ibid* 100, 101.

An occasional conciseness of expression\* favours the view that it is a silver Latin poem, and its date may perhaps be determined with more precision. It cannot have been written before the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D., or the author would certainly have mentioned Vesuvius in his enumeration of volcanic centres (l. 424). It was probably written after Seneca's *Enquiries into Natural Science* (63 A.D.), for Seneca does not refer to it in this work when he has occasion to speak of Ætna and other volcanoes, nor in any of his letters (63-4 A.D.) in which he enumerates the poets who had treated of Ætna. It is the following passage which has caused the poem to be referred to Lucilius. Seneca writes to the latter: † "What odds that you don't describe Ætna in your poem, and touch on this topic, which is a regular one with the poets." This does not prove that Lucilius wrote the *Ætna*—indeed it might be cited as presumptive evidence that he did not, for Seneca only anticipates episodic treatment—but it does show that Seneca was sure the subject of Ætna would attract Lucilius; and, as governor of Sicily and interested in the island, as a poet, and, in fact, author of a poem in which he had already described some of its phenomena, Lucilius may well have gone beyond his friend's anticipations and devoted a whole poem, instead of a part of one, to the Sicilian volcano.

The *Ætna* represents the same stage of knowledge as Seneca's *Enquiries into Natural Science*, but unlike these is purely scientific in purpose. At the outset the

\* E.g. *Callent rure* (with work in the country) *manus*, 262, *tactis per proxima fatis currimus*, 569

† *Epp.* 79, 5 *Quid tibi do ne Ætnam describas in tuo carmine, ne hunc sollemnem omnibus poetis locum attingas* Cf. *infra*, 7, *aut ego te non novi aut Ætna tibi salivam moret*

author declares that he has no concern with the lying tales of mythology; eruptions, which it is his object to explain, have certainly nothing to do with the forges of Vulcan nor with imprisoned giants. He proceeds to account for them by the action of fire and wind in subterranean cavities. After mentioning various theories to explain what sets the wind in motion, he attributes the persistence of volcanic fires to the properties of lava, which are further illustrated by a description of the lava-stream during an eruption. We hurry over sea, says the author, to visit places ennobled by legend or to behold famous works of art, but Nature's handiwork provides a finer spectacle, though indeed Etna has her story too which proves that she can spare as well as destroy. Then follows the tale of the two brothers of Catania, who during an eruption bore away their old parents on their backs while all others were occupied with saving their property, and of how the flames made way for them to pass, and they alone were saved.

The author has watched the cloud hanging over Ætna in calm weather (330), he has inspected the crater (177 ff) and, from the conviction of his description, it may well seem that he has witnessed the irresistible flow of the lava stream during an eruption. Some very rare felicities of expression—as in the suggested resemblance of a sheet of lava palpitating with heat to a waving cornfield\*—seem born of personal observation, as a few graphic military metaphors may reflect the experiences of a soldier.† But on the whole the writer of the *Ætna* has no gift either for poetry or for exposition. Some allowance

\* 497, *flammea messis exultur facies*

† 217, 260, 469, 611, also show that Lucilius had seen military service.

must be made for the corrupt state of the text ; but his scientific explanations are extraordinarily crabbed and obscure. Indeed they show at times what Munro has called "helplessness of exposition." In his love for truth, his impatience with legend, and his admiration for the works of nature he faintly recalls Lucretius. But he has neither the fervour nor the mental vision of the Epicurean.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FLAVIAN AGE

DISILLUSIONED by the vagaries of the last of the Julian line and sobered by the perils consequent on the discovery that emperors could be made elsewhere than at the capital, the Roman people acquiesced with tempered enthusiasm in the rule of a family of humble origin, whose solid qualities served to offer security for the continuance of settled government. This change of temper is reflected in the contrast which it is not fanciful to discern between the literature of the Neronian and that of the Flavian regime. The former had been brilliant, febrile, aspiring. The latter was painstaking, sober, imitative. The systematisation of literary education and the encouragement of literary effort, implied in the establishment of state-paid teachers of rhetoric by Vespasian, and the institution of public competitions in poetry and eloquence by Domitian, find their counterpart in the attainment of a high degree of technical skill. Yet some reaction against the overstrain of the preceding generation is seen in a diminished rhetorical exuberance, while a temper less sanguine and ambitious is betrayed by a changed attitude towards past literary achievement. Lucan had tried to outdo the *Æneid*, and Seneca had developed a prose style which was the antithesis to that of Cicero. But the Flavian epicists regarded Virgil with the profoundest reverence

and paid him the compliment of careful imitation while the most important of Flavian prose writers did his best to inaugurate a revival of the prose style of Cicero.

C PLINIUS SECUNDUS (23-79), commonly known as the elder Pliny to distinguish him from his nephew, earliest of the Flavian writers, was at any rate laborious. The son of a knight, he entered on the career, partly military, partly administrative, which was assigned under the imperial system to members of the second order in the state. He saw a good deal of service in Germany, then held a succession of important posts as *procurator* under Vespasian, and was finally admiral of the fleet at Misenum in the reign of Titus, when he lost his life in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. It was a sufficiently full life, but Pliny combined it with an industry in study of which his nephew has given an amazing account. He would begin work at two or one in the morning, or even at midnight, and go to confer with Vespasian before daybreak, thereafter proceeding to his official duties. Returning from these he would give up the rest of the day to study. A glutton of time, he would continue to be read to or dictate, at dinner, on a journey, and, as far as this was possible, in the bath, and his nephew tells how he reproved a friend who had stopped the reader to correct some error of pronunciation with the remark: "This interruption of yours has lost us more than ten lines." His object was the accumulation of facts. He read nothing without making extracts, saying that no book was so bad as not to be useful in parts. As a consequence he left his nephew a hundred and sixty volumes of notes written in a very small hand and on both sides of the paper.



The most important \* results of this industry were a history in twenty books of all the wars of Rome with the Germans, a history of Rome in thirty-one books, which is conjectured to have covered the thirty-one years from the death of Caligula to the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus (41-71 A.D.), and his only surviving work, a *Natural History* in thirty-seven books.

This vast work opens with (Bk. 1) a dedicatory epistle to Titus and a general Table of Contents, and deals with the following subjects : (Bk. 2) an astronomical and metrological account of the universe, (Bks. 3-6) the Geography of Europe, Asia, and Africa, that is to say of the known world, (Bk. 7) anthropology and human physiology, (Bks. 8-11) zoology, (Bks. 12-19) botany, (Bks. 20-27) vegetable substances as used in medicine, (Bks. 28-32) animal substances as used in medicine, (Bks. 32-37) minerals as used in medicine and more particularly the fine arts.

Though the author called his work a *Natural History* (a term which he was apparently the first to use), it is actually rather an encyclopædia of nature and art, for the anthropological section contains an enumeration of many inventions, and mineralogy is so treated as to embody something like a history of art. Nor has this succession of works, for such the *Natural History* is, the unity which it might have possessed if pervaded by a single idea. It is true that Pliny has a vague conception of the unity of Nature, such as is implied in his Stoic belief that the universe is animate, and is in fact God, that the

\* Other works were a manual on the use of the javelin by cavalry (*de vaculatione equestri*), a life of his friend Pomponius Secundus in two books, the Student (*Studiosus*), a treatise on rhetoric with examples, and eight books on doubtful forms in declensions and conjugations (*dubius sermo*).

popular theology is to be rejected *en bloc*, and that for men, the divine idea is to be realised by mutual help \* He concludes his work with an apostrophe, "Hail, Nature, mother of all, and be gracious, for that by me alone of Romans you have been celebrated in every particular."

But if he believes that Nature is one he has no conception of the laws by which she acts. This *Natural History* is far from being, like Lucretius's poem, an exposition of the operation of law in Nature. His words "the power and majesty of Nature in all her operations cannot be believed if one has a grasp only of parts of her and not the whole" (vii 7), serve as an apology for the relation of marvels instead of preluding the indication of a clue to those operations.

Nor is the treatment of the several subjects either well arranged or coherent. The geography consists for the most part of a list of the divisions of the different countries and of the towns which they contain. In the zoology land animals are described roughly in order of size, but with no distinction of mammalia, reptiles or snails. The medical botany is in effect an enumeration of plants, with lists of the uses to which they can be applied medicinally.

Nor are the twenty thousand "facts" which Pliny declares that his work contains by any means all worthy of the name. He has spent so much time on accumulating statements that he has had little to spare for sifting them. Gibbon has not unfairly described his work as "that immense register in which Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind." His view that no book is so bad as not to be of some use, and his conviction of the infinite ingenuity and caprice of

\* *Deus est mortali iuvare mortalem.*

Nature have together resulted in his accepting, along with the statements of sober authorities, the wildest travellers' tales, and including in the animal kingdom the most amazing monstrosities. It is needless to multiply examples. Among the tribes of Africa he reckons the *scrapodæ* ("shade-foots") whose feet are so large that they can be used as a protection against the sun, and the *astomi* ("mouthless") who subsist upon the scents of fruits and flowers, and among the fauna of Æthiopia the *mantichora*, which has three rows of teeth, the face and ears of a man, a body like a lion's, and a tail with a spike like that of a scorpion. His theory that the sea contains even more monstrosities than the earth, because the germs of living creatures are more liable to be mingled by the action of winds and waves, a theory which prepares him to accept without surprise statements as to the observation of tritons and nereids, as also the existence of sea-elephants, sea-goats, and sea-hares, shows him considerably behind Lucretius in his views as to the origin of species.

And yet if his work is scientific neither in the classification nor the careful verification of statements, it is so in so far as it is an accumulation of facts (or what were believed to be such) made with a view to knowledge, and not, as for instance with Seneca, for the purpose of drawing a moral. This was a motive which was new, and one which, according to the author, appealed little to his contemporaries; if so, it was all the more creditable. Pliny does moralise; he declaims against luxury and upholds the superiority of ancient ways, but he does so only incidentally, just as at intervals he launches forth into rhetoric with a view to achieving the literary effects of which he believed himself capable, but from which he was debarred in general

by the nature of his subject. It is as a collection of miscellaneous information that Pliny's history is valuable. In the Middle Ages it was regarded as a storehouse of knowledge, and its influence was widely felt. It was only when natural science began to base itself on observation and experiment that his reputation declined. To-day perhaps the most important part of his *History of Nature* is that which deals with the history of the plastic art.

Pliny's style is as unequal as his matter. In general it is plain sailing and rather formless, recalling at times that of the writer with whom he was perhaps most familiar, Cato. But where there is an opening for "digressions, declamations, and discourses" (i. 12), such as in the eulogy of the Earth (ii 154), or of Italy (xxxvii. 77), or the description of the song of the nightingale (x 8) his writing becomes highly mannered. He seeks to arrest attention by the artificial order of his words. A sentence on the manifold sportiveness of Nature shown in the endless variation in the forms and colours of shells (ix. 102) has been described as "the wildest in Latin literature."\* The passage in question is characterised by an elaborate accumulation of adjectives. He delights in point, as where with reference to the risks incurred by fishermen and pearl-divers in the provision of luxuries he declares: "We live on perils; but that is not enough, we must needs wear them." Unable to construct periods he is most successful in a succession of brief parallel clauses, and on the whole his style has been largely influenced by Seneca.

More representative of his time than the isolated collector of facts and fictions was the man who became

\* Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, p 316.

the official head of the study of eloquence at Rome, a study as highly developed as that of science was inchoate.

MARCUS FABIUS QUINTILIANUS was born at Calagurris on the Ebro, probably in 35 A.D. He came to Rome early, but after completing his education returned at the age of twenty to his native place, where he occupied himself as a barrister and a teacher of rhetoric. He was not, however, to remain there, for he was brought back to Rome (68 A.D.) by the man who overthrew Nero, and his subsequent career at the capital practically coincided with the reigns of the three Flavian emperors (70-96 A.D.) Already distinguished at the bar, he became (72 A.D.?) the first occupant of the professorial chair of Latin rhetoric established and endowed by Vespasian. Thus Martial addresses him not only as "glory of the Roman gown", but as "supreme controller of our restless youth."\* With high ideals of morality and eloquence Quintilian exercised a great influence on the rising generation, some of the most distinguished of which, including the younger Pliny, probably Tacitus and possibly Suetonius, were among his pupils. After twenty years he retired from teaching and practice, and occupied himself with writing first a lost treatise on the causes of the decline of eloquence, and next "The Training of the Orator" (*Institutio oratoria*) in twelve books. While engaged on the latter work he was made tutor to Domitian's grandnephews, whom the emperor had adopted and destined to succeed him. It was in connection with this charge that, through the influence of Flavius Clemens, father of the young princes, he received the consular insignia. The elevation of a rhetorician to the consulship was regarded by conservative opinion of the day as some-

\* Martial, ii 90.

thing of a paradox, and is mentioned by Juvenal\* as a signal instance of the caprice of Fortune. Yet it was the outcome of the same policy which had recognised education in eloquence as among the responsibilities of the state. Quintilian's book was probably published in 95 A.D., and he does not seem to have survived Domitian, who was assassinated in the following year.

The plan of "The Training of the Orator" is as follows. The first two books are introductory and deal respectively with elementary education (I) and education in the rhetorical school (II). Then come nine books on oratory itself, and since the business of the orator is to discover what he wishes to say (*inventio*), to arrange it (*dispositio*), to clothe it in words (*elocutio*), to commit it to memory (*memoria*), and deliver it (*pronuntiatio*), the subject is treated under these five heads in this order.

Far the most important of these are the first, "invention," to which four books (III-VI) are given, with which is associated one (VII) on arrangement, and the third (*elocutio*), comprising language and style, to which three books (VIII-X); while one book (XI) suffices for memory and delivery. The last book (XII) draws a picture of the ideal orator and the ideal eloquence.

Such is an outline of the contents of "The Training of the Orator." Owing to Quintilian's inclusion of morality in his conception of oratory it is more than a technical treatise. For in order to secure morality he undertakes to indicate the education of the orator from his cradle (Bk. I), and in order to maintain it he sets forth the culture which must be continued by him throughout life (Bk. XII). His treatment of these subjects makes him an authority not merely on oratory but also on education. Thus in his open-

\* Sat. ii. 197.

ing book he discusses the comparative methods of home and school training. He lays stress on the importance of home influences; but the consideration of what these often were in the then state of society conspires with the advantages of publicity for those destined to live in the public eye, of the education of the social sense, of friendships and of emulation offered by the school, to decide him in favour of the latter. His treatment of the questions of such topics as home influence or corporal punishment show him to have anticipated, as he perhaps suggested, Juvenal's paradox: "the highest reverence is due—to youth,"\* and the blessing invoked by the satirist on those who desired that the master should occupy the place of a parent is his, for so is the sentiment.† Nothing can be more admirable than his enumeration of the qualities of the ideal *præceptor* "He should neither have faults nor tolerate them. He should show neither stern austerity nor random affability, lest the first should breed dislike, the second contempt. He should discourse frequently on what is honourable and good, for the oftener he admonishes the seldomer will he chastise. He should not be hot-tempered, nor yet ignore faults which require correction. He should be plain in his mode of teaching, not afraid of hard work, and diligent in seeing that tasks are performed rather than inclined to require too much" Quintilian's elimination of "the dry master" (*aridus magister*) is judicious and humane.

As a treatise on the art of eloquence the work occupies an intermediate position. It is more systematic than Cicero's popular works on oratory, but less so than the technical treatise addressed to Herennius. Some parts,

\* Juvenal, xiv 47

† Cf Juv S vii 209 with Quint *Insl* or 2 ii. 4.

notably the book on arrangement (VII), are exceedingly technical; but even here the subject is relieved by examples, largely drawn from Cicero, a method which makes the disquisition on tropes in the eighth and that on figures of thought and speech in the ninth book actually interesting. While regard to his reputation for thoroughness sometimes makes Quintilian mention classifications which he regards as superfluous,\* his effort is always to eliminate vain distinctions.† Experience inclines him to deprecate hard and fast rules, yet he does not content himself with saying "Everything depends upon circumstances." Rather does he indicate how circumstances may prove a guide.‡

It is not for nothing that he has been a practising barrister. Experience, for instance, has brought home to him the necessity for clearness of language. "We must take care not merely that the judge may understand us, but that he may not be able to misunderstand us." Indeed some remarks as to the handling of witnesses, for instance that an adverse witness, "if sensible and self-possessed, may be dismissed as malicious and obstinate," savours of chicanery. Such is the anecdote which tells how, when counsel on the other side brought across the court a girl for whom relationship with the defendant was claimed, intending to leave her in the arms of her brother; the writer directed the latter to withdraw, so that the advocate had to take his little girl back again in some confusion.

When he comes to the actual writing of the speech exalted ideals do not blind him to the limitations of the individual. He very appositely recalls how Julius Florus,§ on eliciting, as an explanation of his nephew's woe-begone countenance, that for three days he had vainly been trying

\* *E g.* 3, ix, 2    3, xi, i

† *E g.* 3, xi, 2 i    ii, 62

‡ 4, i, 44.

§ Perhaps Horace's friend of *Epp.* i 3 and ii. i.



to find an exordium for a declamation, asked with a smile : "Do you wish to write better than you can ?" Nor can anything be sounder than his advice to those engaged in composing a speech. "We must not loll back and stare at the ceiling, trying to stimulate our invention by muttering to ourselves and waiting for ideas to turn up, but consider what the case requires, what is suitable to the party concerned, what the nature of the occasion is, and what the disposition of the judge, and set ourselves to write like reasonable beings" (X.iii, 15). On delivery, the management of the voice and breath, on gesture and expression, even the "stance" of the orator and the adjustment of the folds of his gown, Quintilian's directions are minute and precise. For instance he conceives that when Cicero opened his speech for Archias with the words "if there be any ability in me, judges, and I am sensible how little there is," his hand, the first four fingers slightly curved at the extremities, was drawn in towards his body, not far from the chin or breast, and then gradually lowered and withdrawn from the person with the fingers spread out." The gesture indicated is too theatrical for a northern audience; but it is logically conceived and accurately described. With a view to the formation of oratorical style Quintilian recommends (Bk. X) a wide course of reading, and, in giving a list of Greek and Roman authors, recommended for the purpose, with a brief estimate of each, he appears as a literary critic. These estimates are to some extent limited by the purpose which he has in view. Homer for instance is considered only in the light of a model for orators. His appreciations of Greek writers do not appear to have been originated by himself. Though not borrowed from any one writer they seem to embody traditional and generally received opinions as to their respective merits.

In his critiques on the Latin writers, though he is more independent, he is hampered by the method of comparing each of the Latins with some writer in the Greek canon who had treated the same branch of literature. Rarely brilliant, though they enshrine some happy phrases, such as, "Livy's milky richness" or "too much in love of his own cleverness" with reference to Ovid, and sometimes concise to the point of perfunctoriness (for it was hardly worth while to characterise Lucretius as "difficult"), these appreciations are sane and sober. Far the most elaborate, as the most significant, are the eulogy of Cicero (admiration for whom is pronounced the criterion of the student's progress) and the strictures on Seneca. Taken together these two passages define Quintilian's attitude as regards the style of Latin prose. The ideal which animated him in his endeavour to "recall to severer standards an oratorical manner corrupted and enervated by every kind of fault" was Cicero, and the faults in question were in the main affectation, the break up of the period, and the excessive cult of point, for which no one writer had so much responsibility as Seneca.

But though Quintilian held these views his own style is not purely Ciceronian. Indeed he himself declared that "our chief is not to be our only model" (X. 11. 24), and admitted that some concessions might be made to the popular demand for point. Certainly his diction, tinged as it is with poetic colour and exhibiting some silver Latin depravations in the meaning of words, is far from being "Tully's, every word." Still in making points he exercises restraint. His main object is to express his meaning, and he does so clearly and without tumidity. Indeed his preoccupation with this object often interferes with the periodic structure of his sentences. This, how-

ever, is what he affects, and his periods, however inferior to Cicero's in grace and flow, stand for principles of sentence formation which were in opposition to, and for a time arrested, the tendencies which had been at work for the last hundred years.

The works which have come down to us from SEXTUS JULIUS FRONTINUS (40-103 A.D.) are of technical rather than literary interest. Referred to by the younger Pliny as "one of the two most eminent men of his day," he filled a succession of important military and civil posts, and compiled sundry works in which he embodied his own experience for the benefit of others, or collected information for his own guidance in the discharge of his duties. A treatise on the art of war is lost, and of two books on land surveying only fragments remain. But under the title of "stratagems" we have a collection of extracts, or summaries of passages, from historical writers relating to ruses and other military expedients, arranged in three books according as they were employed before battle, in or after it, or in sieges; to which has been added a fourth book by a later hand dealing with operations and manifestos arranged under headings which imply a moral point of view, *e.g.* discipline, temperance, justice, etc. Two books on "The Waters of Rome" (*de aquis urbis Romæ*), compiled by the author when appointed by Nerva (in 97 A.D.) to the charge of the water-supply (*cura aquarum*), give accurate information as to the Roman aqueducts.

The *Argonautica* of GAIUS VALERIUS FLACCUS, is characteristic of the time, for it is a careful rehandling of a subject already treated by Apollonius Rhodius and Varro of Atax, everywhere supplemented by docile imitation of the language and the thought of Virgil.

But though the subject was legendary the author might well have thought that at a time when the Romans were penetrating to seas as unknown as the Euxine had once been, the tale of Jason's adventurous cruise might arrest interest. Valerius dedicated his epic to Vespasian, and in its opening lines referred to the glory he had gained by "opening the seas" and to the fact that his fleets had sailed the "Caledonian Main" which the Julian Emperors had been unable to reach.\* And it is possible that he intended to exploit this vein of contemporary interest still further. The poem, begun early in Vespasian's reign, and left unfinished at the writer's death (to which Quintilian refers as recent in 90 A.D.), breaks off abruptly in the course of the eighth book leaving the Minyæ on the island of Peuce at the mouth of the Danube. They had still to reach home, and it is likely that the anticipations† of the punishment of Pelias the tyrant uncle for the death to which he had driven Jason's parents were intended to be realised within the compass of the poem. There was therefore ample matter to fill up the remainder of the twelve books of which Valerius probably intended his epic like the *Æneid* to consist. And the fact that the marriage of Jason and Medea which in Apollonius had been celebrated in Phæacia (Corcyra) is made by Valerius to take place on Peuce has suggested the possibility that the latter intended to bring the Argonauts back by a different way, that is to say not to the Adriatic reached by some unknown river from the Danube, but to the Baltic shore, and so home by the outer seas‡ and Gibraltar. This would have given

\* Arg i 7

† I. 807-15.

‡ As in the so-called Orphic poem in Greek (A.D. 400), in which there is mention of Ierne (Ireland).

Valerius an opportunity of paying further compliments to Vespasian and also of bringing the Argonauts into relation with various places in Italy with which they were dimly connected, a course quite in keeping with the occurrence of numerous Roman allusions throughout the existing books.

However this may be Valerius Flaccus certainly handled Apollonius' *Argonautica* more freely than Varro of Atax, who had adhered to Apollonius' division into four books and, to judge by the scanty fragments, had done little more than translate and paraphrase. Valerius is often brief where Apollonius is full and vice versa, though on the whole his tendency is to expand. He omits some irrelevant episodes and introduces new ones, such as the rescue of Hesione, a Trojan Andromeda, by Hercules and Telamon. In arrangement he effected some improvements, as in the opening of the poem, in which he describes the circumstances which led up to the quest, instead of beginning at once like Apollonius with a list of the heroes who took part in it. In consulting probabilities and in discovering motives he has bettered his original. Thus he makes Æetes promise to give Jason the fleece if the latter will help him against his brother Perses and the Scythians. Jason does so, and we have a book of battle (vi), more congenial it is true to Roman taste than our own; but the treacherous refusal of Æetes to pay the promised reward gives Jason more justification in having recourse to the sorceries of Medea than is to be found in Apollonius. This is but one instance of the way in which Valerius has improved on his predecessor's treatment of the characters. He has made Jason more of a man of action and a leader than he is in the Greek poem, in which his lack of

initiative and his complete eclipse by Medea is something of a blemish. In tracing the gradual growth of the passion of love he has surpassed Apollonius, and, it may be added, Virgil, whose Dido is based to some extent on Apollonius' Medea.

A learned poet, Valerius has supplemented his original from various sources, but above all from Virgil. It is indeed in Valerius Flaccus that "the tendency to reproduce Virgil's thought and diction first appears." \* Styrrus, Medea's displaced lover, is Virgil's Turnus, violence and all, and features in Virgilian characters have been borrowed to fill out and modify those of Apollonius. The parting speech of Evander to Pallas has been utilised in the farewells of Alcimedea and Æson to Jason, while the picture of Elysium, drawn in connection with the death of the hero's blameless father, beautiful and coherent as it is, is compounded of three separate passages in the sixth *Æneid*. As with the thought, so with the language, Valerius constantly uses Virgilian words and expressions alone or in new combinations, and it is to be noted that he alters by the substitution of words without attempting to improve upon the original.

The attempt would have been vain, for he has no natural aptitude for Virgilian grace, and he betrays a tendency towards a method of expression curt, elliptical and sometimes obscure. In his verse for all his wish to be Virgilian he has fallen under the influence of the smoother and more imitable Ovid, to whom, indeed, in his preference of the dactyl, Valerius approaches more nearly than any other Latin poet. Avoidance of elision, want of variation in his pauses, and a tendency to

\* The phrase is Mr. Summers, from whose study of the *Argonautica* I have derived much assistance.

stereotype the arrangement of words in the line combine to produce in him a certain monotony.

Yet Valerius has qualities of his own. Like many of the later Latin poets he is strongest in description. Many passages might be cited ; but perhaps this, a brief but surely admirable picture of a cave by the sea, may serve as an example.

*Strange to blithe day, and heavenly fires, a home  
Unblest, atremble with the thunderous sea \**

iv 179

Most striking is the description of the Argonauts' first night upon the waters. Expressed with a kind of Lucretian simplicity it shows an imaginative conception of the terrors of the unknown

*The very calm of things  
Affrights them, and the stillness of the world.*

ii 38

and the simile in which their fears are likened to those of one who, benighted on a wide plain, seems to see the trees moving to meet him preternaturally enlarged in the gloom is at once original and suggestive.

His similes indeed, too numerous though they are and sometimes tasteless—as witness the comparison of Medea in her restlessness with a dog on the verge of madness †—sometimes far fetched or not really illustrative, especially reveal his sense of beauty ; as where Medea among her maidens is pronounced

*As fair as Proserpine before she paled  
At sight of Hell, and all her beauty fled*

v. 346

\* H. E. Butler quotes the original as a favourable instance of Valerius' metrical skill

† vii 134.

or where the silence which ensued when the mourning for Cyzicus was over is compared with the silence which falls on Egypt in spring when the birds have departed for the north (iii. 359).

Valerius Flaccus' careful refashioning of earlier materials is marked by the sobriety characteristic of the Flavian age. It has little of the glow and the enthusiasm which warm the Augustan epic. It is only necessary to compare the arrival of the Argonauts at the Phasis with the arrival of the Trojans at the Tiber, or the imprecations of Dido on Æneas with those of Æson on Pelias to realise how much the later poet has lost by dealing with a subject which had no imaginative significance for the men of his own day. The glory of discovery was an idea neither strongly nor widely enough felt to animate the poem. Nor is the narrative enlivened by a sense of the joy of eventful living. Valerius is not so set upon the quest as not to tarry by the way, and though the tale of the Argonauts is of an episodical character, and the poet has omitted some digressions made by his predecessor, yet in the elaboration of episodes not relevant to the purpose of the poem the influence of the recitation-room is distinctly perceptible.

The interest of Valerius' poem lies not in the long succession of adventures but in the relations between Medea and Jason. It is the study of Medea's passion, a study in which he has developed something of the art of the novelist, which has given Valerius the most favourable scope for his powers, and it is in the meeting between her and Jason, the most critical and the most human part of the poem, that the beauty of the imagery, the vigour of the speeches and the pathos and simplicity of the expression show the poet at his best.



Medea venturing forth under the guidance of Venus with the spells, and quaking at the silent houses, is compared with a newly fledged bird trying her wings. In the grove of Hecate Jason suddenly appears, and they meet

*As shades  
In depth of chaos meet, nor utter voice.*

vii. 401

It is worth noting how much more of mystery and impressiveness there is about this meeting in the darkness of the night and the deeper darkness of the grove than in the daylight encounter in the Greek epic. The simile which follows describing Jason and Medea as

*Like silent pines or moveless cypresses  
Ere strong south winds have made their branches meet*

vii 405

is translated from Apollonius,\* where it suits its context better, but it receives a skilful additional touch from the Latin poet.

Jason speaks first. He hopes that Medea brings him aid. He refers to Æetes' treachery, but declares that he is ready to die, and that without the fleece he will not go.

Medea's words are full of hesitation and something like reproach. "Why did you come? Why did you place hopes in me? Why did you not trust in your own valour? As for your champions Juno and Minerva where are they? for I am here alone to help you, I, a princess of a foreign house." "But," she continues, "your fate constrains me, take my gifts."—and therewith she begins to bring forth the charms from her bosom. Yet still she hesitates. "Howbeit if you place any hopes in

the gods who befriend you, or your own valour, even now,  
I beseech you, let me be, and suffer me to return to my  
poor father innocent." And forthwith

*With sighs and tears amany  
As she were yielding fatherland and fame  
She gave the spells.\**

Then, guilty now, she spends upon him all her charms,  
and tells him how if he cast his helmet among them the  
warriors sprung from the dragon's teeth will fight against  
each other, while her father will turn and look at her in  
wrathful surprise. The reflection gives her pause.

*But ever more and more in thought she passed  
O'er the deep seas, and saw the Minyan crew  
Spread sail without her Tall in grief extreme  
She took him by the hand and humbly cried  
"Think of me, pray, and I, be very sure,  
Will think of thee"*

vii 703 ff

How different, she continues, will be his fate and hers ;  
yet she will gladly die to save him. On this Jason, for he  
has felt her spells, breaks out into protestations of  
devotion and curses against himself if he prove faithless,  
curses which to those who know the sequel are full of  
tragic irony.

*He spoke and ceased but still entranced they stand,  
And now lift glad and daring eyes of youth  
(Eyes that as oft the while sweet visions catch),  
Now cast them down for shame, and still delay to speak*

vii. 511 ff.

Not altogether without reason does Quintilian write  
"in Valerius Flaccus we have lost much."

A more signal instance of Flavian mediocrity and Flavian  
conservatism is supplied by SILIUS ITALICUS (25-101 A.D.)

Born perhaps a quarter of a century before Valerius Flaccus, his epic on the second Punic war was begun some years after \* the *Argonautica*, since poetry was the occupation of his later life. In the words of an interested admirer (and Silius was one of those noble authors who rarely heard a word of honest criticism) "he did not attempt the mysteries of sublime Virgil till he had completed the work of the learned Cicero."† For Silius made some name as an orator, though as an informer under Nero he acquired a dubious reputation which he succeeded in living down. After being consul in the year of the four Emperors (68 A.D.) and pro-consul of Asia in the following year he lived on his estates and devoted himself to literature. Of this he was an enthusiastic amateur, and his wealth enabled him to become the owner of the villa of Cicero at Tusculum and the tomb of Virgil at Naples. For the latter he felt unbounded reverence, celebrating his birthday more scrupulously than his own. It was doubtless this feeling which induced him to choose for his subject those wars of Æneas' descendants which Virgil's Dido had foretold. Apart from this the second Punic war was a safe subject, and as such commended itself to this political vicar of Bray, who had succeeded in being the last consul under Nero, the adviser of Vitellius, and a high official under Vespasian. Ennius, who had given three books of his annalistic epic to the war in which he had fought, Silius might hope to surpass, for he could utilise Livy for the matter, while Virgil had shown how epics should be written. If such were Silius' anticipations, the seventeen books of the *Punica* were far from realising them. In his narrative Silius followed Livy closely.

\* 88 A.D.

† Martial, vii 63.5.

But he obscured the historian's characterisation without reproducing his eloquence. Fulvius, Marcellus, Scipio, clear-cut in Livy, are blurred in Silius' *Punica*. They are good citizens and good fighters but that is all. Fabius alone is fairly drawn. As for Hannibal the subtle politician, the able strategist, where is he? Instead we have a monster gnashing his teeth, purple with rage, or in his calmer moments merely the braggart soldier. Nor do historical facts gain dignity by being stated in pompous periphrasis. When Varro returned to Rome after the defeat of Cannæ the senate thanked him for not having despaired of the Republic. In Silius the fathers "testify to their belief that he has acted magnanimously in that trusting in his ancestors (who were these?) and his exalted authority he has not despaired of the city of the Laomedontiadæ." Thus does Silius turn Livy's prose into poetry.\*

If Silius spoils Livy he does his best to make Virgil ridiculous. Virgilian expedients are everywhere called into requisition as if, since they had been used by him, no epic was complete without them.

So we have catalogues of warriors (three to Virgil's one), funeral games (in honour of the Scipios), and communings with the spirits of the departed. Trasimennus appears to Hannibal as Tiber to Æneas, and Jupiter unfolds the future of Rome which culminates in the *Punica* in the glories of the Flavian as in the *Æneid* in those of the Julian family. But if Silius borrows Virgil's devices he does not know how to use them. The scenes engraved on the shield of Hannibal have neither the completeness nor the significance of those on the shield of Æneas.

\* I have reproduced much of the criticism of Silius in Pichon's *Hist Lat Lit* p. 390

The shade of Scipio's father who appears to him as Anchises to the Trojan has nothing to say to him except to recount his own fate and recommend his son to be cautious.\* The most pervasive of Virgil's expedients, the employment of divine intervention, is sedulously exploited by Silius. But if it is felt to be unconvincing even in a mythological epic, its effect in an historical epic is actually harmful. Silius was dealing with characters whose motives were known ; by substituting miraculous impulses he was depriving them of life. Did Hannibal need the instigation of Juno to fire his hatred against Rome ? Did the Romans require the instigation of Jupiter to instruct them to vote for Fabius as dictator ? By methods such as these Silius, instead of dignifying his characters as he intended, depressed them. He found them men, he left them puppets.

Has Silius then no merits ? He has at any rate the negative merit that, influenced by his models, he avoided affectation. And it was impossible that, with such models before him, and animated by an enthusiasm for his subject which sufficed to carry him through the longest, if the worst, of Latin epics, he should not have penned a few lines with some suggestion of the energy and the greatness of Rome. Hannibal, surveying the Roman dead on the morrow of Trasimene, marks how

*On their brows  
Menace endures, and in their faces rage*

v 673

Rome herself is "the nobler for her woes," and in the scene of exorcism in which the Sibyl indicates among the

: *Martis moderare furori.*

mighty dead the figure of Homer, there is a touch of which Virgil need not have been ashamed.

*All these events the bard not seeing sang  
And glorified the Troy from which ye sprang* \*  
xiii 790—I.

If Silius Italicus was a complacent amateur, P. PAPINIUS STATIUS was a meticulous professional. He was a product of the state encouragement of poetry which had been systematised by the Flavian emperors. He was brought up in a literary environment. His father kept a school at Naples at which special attention was given to the poets of Greece, and was indeed a poet himself. He had won prizes at poetical competitions at Naples and also in Greece, had written a poem on the burning of the Capitol (69 A.D.), and was contemplating another on the eruption of Vesuvius (79 A.D.) when he died (80 A.D.). He had the satisfaction of seeing his son, who was educated at his school, win a prize at the festival of Augustus at Naples, and when the latter began his epic on the legend of Thebes he gave him not only encouragement but help.

On his father's death Statius came to Rome and the period of his literary production, which was mainly spent there, practically coincides with the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.). At Rome his principal occupation was doubtless the composition of his *Thebais*, to which he devoted twelve years (79-91 A.D.). He was able to advertise it while still in process of production by reciting passages from it in public. The practice of recitation was at its height in the reign of Domitian, and Statius was a prince of reciters. But his recitations, however popular,

\* Sainte Beuve has expressed his admiration of the pregnant *vestram* applied to *Troiam* here (Plessis).

were only indirectly lucrative, and Statius supplemented them by other means of support. He wrote librettos for popular actors of pantomime, and composed occasional poems for members of the fashionable world from the Emperor downwards. Juvenal's statement that but for the former practice he would have starved is doubtless an exaggeration. Statius was in no danger of destitution. He owned a property at Alba, which the Emperor provided with a water-supply. In any case Juvenal's words refer to the early days of Statius' sojourn in Rome. His reputation must have been increased by his winning the prize at the Alban festival with a poem on Domitian's Germanic and Dacian campaigns (about 89 A.D.) and confirmed by the appearance in 92 A.D. of his completed *Thebais*. This was followed shortly by the publication of his first book of *Silvæ* (occasional poems) two more books of which appeared before 95 A.D. But in 94 A.D. he was defeated at the contest on the Capitoline. Perhaps in chagrin at this, but more probably in consequence of ill health, he left Rome and returned to Naples (94 A.D.). There he produced his fourth book of *Silvæ*, and was working at his epic on Achilles. But the completion of the latter and of a fifth book of *Silvæ* were interrupted by his death, which there is no reason to put later than that of Domitian in 96 A.D.

The subject of the *Thebais* is as follows. After Ædipus had blinded himself in horror at the discovery that he was the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother, his sons Eteocles and Polynices reigned in his stead. But, cursed by their father for their treatment of him, they could not agree. At the opening of the poem Polynices is in exile, excluded by Eteocles in contravention of the agreement by which they were each to

reign in alternate years. Polynices and Tydeus of Calydon, also in exile, meet at the palace of Adrastus King of Argos, and become the husbands of the two daughters of the King. Adrastus undertakes to restore Polynices to his country, and with his two sons-in-law and four other chieftains begins the war of "the seven against Thebes." The undertaking is a disastrous failure. One after another the chieftains fall. Finally Eteocles and Polynices kill each other in battle and Adrastus the sole survivor flies. This is the main part of the story told by Statius after the Alexandrine epicist Antimachus. The subject had not, like the Trojan legend, any national significance for Romans, and was indeed melancholy and forbidding—a tale of "old unhappy far-off things." It is told by Statius at tedious length. He does not indeed like Antimachus, whose epic ran to twenty-four books, include the war of the Epigoni in which members of the next generation reversed the verdict of the previous war. But he does tell how Creon refused burial to Polynices and his associates, how the widows of the fallen applied to Theseus king of Athens, and how Theseus advanced on Thebes, slew Creon and duly buried the dead.

His purpose in carrying the story to this point will be discussed later ; but certainly the preparations for the conflict are needlessly prolonged. The meeting of Polynices and Tydeus on a night of storm and rain, and the quarrel between them, which was succeeded by a fast friendship (Bk. i), and the ambushing of Tydeus (Bk. iii) on his return from a mission to Thebes to demand justice for Polynices, with the breathless combat in which he disposes of his fifty assailants, are graphically told. But the double introduction of the dead Laius first brought from the



underworld by Mercury to incense Eteocles against his brother (Bk. II), then exorcised by Tiresias to foretell the issue of the war, seems superfluous. When at last the heroes are on the march they are held up for two books and two hundred lines by an episode which is quite irrelevant. Hypsipyle who, leaving her foster child Opheltes, guides the warriors to a spring when they are afflicted by a drought, recounts her previous experiences (Bk. V). Meantime a serpent kills the child, and his memory must be kept alive by the institution of the Nemean games which are described in the following book (Bk. VI). The precedent of Virgil's six books of wandering which precede six books of battle has led Statius astray, for the Argive champions are on a march, not on pilgrimage, whereas the recital of Æneas' past is vital to the purpose of the *Æneid*. So we reach the fighting, a subject which Virgil, despite all the interest which he could borrow from local and national associations, could not make attractive. Statius does not succeed better. He has in fact a sensibility, resembling, but less imaginative than, Virgil's. This stands him in good stead in pathetic passages such as the death of Parthenopæus, the boy warrior from Arcadia, slain in his first battle and weeping as he dies for his fallen charger; but it must have made him find the description of continual combat a far from congenial task. Fortified, however, by a thorough acquaintance with epic, Statius discharges it faithfully. The more important encounters are elaborated with all the apparatus of speeches, divine interventions, and hairbreadth escapes, while proper names are skilfully dovetailed in the recital of promiscuous slaughter.\*

\* E.g. 8.447. *Iphis eques, pedes Argus, Abas auriga iacebant*

1.447 *Ense Pholus Chromin ense, duos Helicaonas hasta transigit*

The characters are but shadowy. Tydeus alone is drawn in clear and vigorous lines. Fierce foe and faithful friend, he is curt in speech and prompt in action. Dying, his spirit shows itself in the words in which he expresses his indifference about burial.

*I hate these limbs, and this frail body's use  
Which plays the spirit traitor.*

viii. 738

Some striking moments there are. Amphiaraus (vii. 815-823), the warrior seer, descending alive to Tartarus down the gulf which has yawned at his feet, still grasping rein and spear and looking up at the sky until it is shut out by the closing of the earth above him, is a figure which is nothing less than sublime.

On the whole the *Thebais* is too reminiscent to be successful. Statius is overweighted by the traditions of epic and in particular of Virgilian epic. It is thus that he addresses his work.

*Not thine the inspired Æneid to approach,  
Follow far off, and still its steps revere*

*Theb.* xii 816.

In truth he follows them far too closely. True to Virgilian precedent, he represents every occurrence as caused by divine intervention, not so absurdly as Silius who is dealing with historical characters, but less convincingly than Virgil with whom the result at least of the celestial intrigues is felt to represent the working out of a divine Providence in favour of Rome. Character and episode are dutifully echoed. Statius' Adrastus is Virgil's Latinus, and his Capaneus, Mezentius. War is precipitated in the *Æneid* by the death of a tame stag, in the *Thebais* by that of two tame tigers caused in each case by a Fury.

As for Dymas and Hopleus, slain in the night combat while attempting to recover the bodies of Polynices and Tydeus, Statius makes no secret of their *provenance*, for he expresses the aspiration that Nisus and Euryalus will not despise them as comrades in the world below.

Statius' workmanship is excellent. Inferior in poetic feeling to Valerius Flaccus he is far more of an artist in words. If he plays tricks with these he is never clumsy. His similes are a case in point. Too numerous, not sufficiently varied and sometimes too long, they are always exquisitely finished. He is occasionally guilty of the rhetorical exaggeration so conspicuous in Lucan. He makes Tydeus, for instance, send helmets whirling through the skies with the heads inside (VIII. 699), and describes the missiles hurled in opposite directions as so numerous that a block is caused; "iron clouds are suspended in the heavens" (VIII. 412). But this is not often. In his verse Statius is the most successful of the imitators of Virgil. More dactylic than his master's his hexameters are neither ponderous like Lucan's nor tripping like Ovid's, and he successfully avoids monotony by the variation of his pauses. Yet he does not attain to the subtle union of sound and sense which constitutes the unique charm of the Virgilian hexameter, and high as is the level of his versification, he has written few lines which remain in the memory. Macaulay indeed went beyond the mark when he declared that the *Thebais* contained but two worthy of a great poet; those describing the cry which greeted the return of the sole survivor of Tydeus's fifty assailants as

*Like the last cry from cities to the foe  
Laid open, or from sinking ships at sea*

But there are not many which will rank with that which shows Jocasta issuing from the gate

*In all the majesty of woe*

VII. 478

Workmanship there is in the *Thebaid* ; but is there more ? It has been said that it has "no national interest, no moral conception, no religious or philosophical doctrine." The first point may be conceded, but is it indeed a soulless epic? There is evidently room for two opinions on the subject, for Prof. Verrall has declared the poem to be "a document of the first importance to the history of European religion." The subject of that part of the epic story on which the *Thebaid* is based was the doom of unlawful war, war waged in the face of warnings and in defiance of natural ties. This moral Statius does not fail to keep in view. But this is not all. It is not surely for mere rhetorical effect that he everywhere emphasises the hideous ferocity of the conflict—the insane fury of Tydeus who bites the severed head of his slayer to the brain, the culmination of horror in the fratricidal combat from which Mars flies appalled and Minerva stands aloof, leaving their places to be taken by the powers of hell. Here is a very orgy of hate, and it is carried to its extreme limit in the persecution of the dead. Staggered humanity demands a remedy, and the poem supplies one in the doctrine of pity which is substituted for that of power. This doctrine which is the essence of the description of the altar of mercy at Athens (xii. 481) was not, as a matter of fact, due in Statius to Christianity, but it belongs to the humanised Hellenism which was one of the forces which assisted in the spread of Christianity, and its presence in the *Thebaid* supplies a

\* *Magna cum maiestate malorum.*

partial explanation of the fact that Dante claimed Statius as a Christian.\*

The *Achilleis* was intended to relate the whole career of Achilles. The part which was completed (a book and a fragment) tells how Thetis, in order to save her son from his fated end in the war, placed him, disguised as a girl, among the daughters of Lycomedes, King of Scyros, how he became enamoured of Deidamia, one of these daughters, and how Ulysses identified him and induced him to go with him to the war. The style of the *Achilleis* is simpler than that of the *Thebaid*. There is a charm about the picture of Achilles fascinated by his first sight of Deidamia, and the terror of the maidens and the animation of Achilles at the sudden blast of the trumpet are graphically described. But it may be doubted whether the *Achilleis*, if completed, would have added to Statius' reputation. The early scenes actually treated were those calculated to show the poet at his best. They would have been followed by a long succession of battles in which Statius would have been pitted against Homer. The completed poem would have been of formidable length, and it may be doubted whether a biography with its necessary want of unity is a suitable subject for epic.

Statius' *Silvæ* were occasional poems. Thus among the six addressed to Domitian one (I. i.) describes a colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor lately unveiled in the Forum, another (IV. i.) congratulates him on his seventeenth consulate, a third (IV. ii.) conveys the poet's thanks for the honour of dining at the palace, and a fourth (IV. iii.) celebrates the completion of a branch of the Appian way. So with the rest. The birth of a child (IV. vii., IV. viii.), the recovery from an illness (I. iv.) called for congratula-

\* *Literary Essays, Classical and Modern*, Verrall, p. 219.

tions, a wedding for a hymeneal song (I. ii.), a departure for good wishes for the journey (III. ii.). On the other hand the death of a father (III. iii.), a wife (V. i.), a favourite slave (II. i., II. vi.), or indeed a parrot (II. v.), evoked a consolation or a lament.\* There were descriptions of villas (I. iii., II. ii.), of a chapel (III. i.), a bath (I. v.), a tree of remarkable shape (II. iii.), or a work of art (IV. vi.), calculated to please the owners. This classification does not cover all the poems which present considerable variety.

In dealing with these subjects Statius used for the most part the metre of which he had most mastery. Twenty-six of the thirty-two poems are in hexameters; indeed Statius made a new departure in applying this metre to subjects hitherto presented in the form of elegy or epigram. Of the remaining six four are in hendecasyllables, one of them (IV. ix.) being a playful remonstrance suggested by a similar poem by Catullus, and two are odes (Sapphic, IV. vii. and Alcaic, IV. v.) in the Horatian manner.

Connected with the occasional character of the *Silvæ* is the fact that they were improvised, or at any rate written at speed to meet the occasion. This feature is indicated in the title *Silvæ*,† which means in effect "rough drafts," and it is emphasised in the introductions which Statius prefixed to each of his five books. He says that none of the pieces in the first book took more than two days to write, some only one day, while the description

\* The poem on the birthday of Lucan (iii. 7), who was dead, partakes to some extent of the character of a lament (*epicedion*).

† *Silva* as a title for a kind of composition is a translation of *ἄλν*, which in the language of the schools meant material not yet worked up. It was applied to prose as well as poetical improvisations (Quintilian, X. iii. 17).

of the bath of Claudius Etruscus was produced during an interval at dinner.\* The fashion of improvisation originating in the schools of rhetoric, where the delivery of speeches on the spur of the moment formed part of the curriculum, commended itself to poets in the position of Statius as encouraging the increased output of poetry of a kind which was profitable, but was no doubt in the main due to the requirements of the recipients. It is of the essence of the occasional poem that it should be ready, in some cases on the occasion to which it refers, in others as soon after it as possible.

Produced at speed, the *Silva* are not without blemishes such as verbal recurrences, and the use of stereotyped phrases and elaborated commonplace. But if they exhibit the triviality of matter which Quintilian considered inseparable from improvisation† it cannot be said that they are defective in arrangement. They labour however under disadvantages due not to haste but to the fact that they are largely poems of compliment. They are characterised by a certain artificiality of tone. They exhibit a copious use of mythological allusion ("Iliac" or "Pylia years," that is to say a life longer than that of Priam or of Nestor, is common form for length of days) and of divine intervention in the interest of exalted persons. When Rutilius Gallicus the city prefect is ill (l. iv. 58.) Apollo applies to Æsculapius for a remedy, and the wedding song for Arruntius tells how Cupid successfully pleaded the cause of the lover with Venus. (l. ii. 65) But the use of mythology was the accepted method of turning prose into poetry. The descriptions

\* *Inter moram cenæ. Silvæ Præf. I*

† Quintilian, X. iii. 17 *Manet in rebus temere congestis quæ sunt levitas.*

of villas in Pliny's letters are very like those in Statius' *Silvæ*, with legend and Naiad and Hamadryad exsected. That divine interventions are not to be taken too seriously may be inferred from the unmistakably playful handling of the god Hercules in the poem (III. 1.) which describes the erection of a chapel to him at the villa of Pollius at Sorrento. A smart picnic party is driven by a sudden shower to take refuge in a poor shrine dedicated to Hercules and generally frequented only by fishermen. The god draws the owner aside and points out the suitability of his having a better house, and when his hint is taken and an elegant chapel is in process of construction lends a hand himself in the darkness of the night.

In the poems addressed to Domitian, compliment becomes hyperbolical flattery. And yet the hard words of Macaulay about Statius "Flattering a tyrant and the minion of a tyrant for a morsel of bread" are not altogether merited. Flattery of an Emperor was etiquette, and etiquette as to which Domitian was especially exacting. Statius, most literary and least political of poets, must have felt that he had no choice but to carry further the somewhat outworn conventions introduced by the Augustan poets, while he was predisposed in favour of Domitian as his father's pupil and inclined to assume merit in the highly placed. This trait appears in his poem to officials like Etruscus and Abascantus, while in the case of persons like Stella or Pollius, who, though socially his superiors, were on terms of friendship with him, he evinces an unmistakable warmheartedness. In those poems which deal with the poet's own affairs and were consequently not written to order the question of insincerity does not arise. The letter (V. v.) in which he seeks to reconcile his wife to his intention of leaving



Rome for Naples is of an intimacy rare in ancient literature. This and his lament for his father (V. iii.) prove that his use of mythological conventions was perfectly consistent with real feeling, indeed in the latter poem the, to us, excessive elaboration of mythological adornment is definitely intended as a tribute due to the memory of the dead poet. His lament over the death of his foster child (V. v.) contains the broken expression of the most poignant anguish of bereavement.

One feature has gained for the *Silvæ* more attention than is now enjoyed by the epics on which Statius expended so much more time and labour. This is their realism. The orientation of Domitian's colossal statue and the buildings which surrounded it, are indicated with a precision invaluable to the archæologist. In the lyric piece on the extension of the Appian road, technical details, in strange contrast to the prophecy of the Sibyl of Cumæ which follows them, make this poem along with a passage in Vitruvius, the principal source of our knowledge of Roman road construction. The books studied in the school of the elder Statius, the minor works of Lucan, the marbles used in Etruscus' bath or Pollius' dining-room, the steps in the official career of Etruscus' father, the secretarial duties of Abascantus, all are enumerated with conscientious exactitude. But this particularity is associated with notable descriptive skill and, what is more, with not a little insight into the charm of natural scenery or the merits of a work of art. Statius has an eye not merely for the tiled floors of Vopiscus' Villa at Tivoli (I. iii.), but for the trees which "lean over the shallow rapids," and the shadows which stretch unchanged across the hurrying stream. He is aware not only of the manifold conveniences of Pollius' Sorrentine

home (II. 11), but of the deep peace which broods over all and accords so well with the serenity of the owner's mind. Similarly in his happy description of a statuette of Hercules (IV. vi.) which stood on Vindex's table he recognises the impression of greatness and power which the artist's skill had enabled a work of minute proportions to convey.

Most elevated in tone among the *Silvæ* are the hendecasyllables on Lucan's birthday. Referring as they do to one no longer living, they have the character of a lament rather than a festal lay. The lines in which Calliope sadly foretells how her nursling, while singing of battles and bringing solace to the mighty dead, would by the crime of a frantic tyrant be stricken mute, breathe a generous indignation. But the poem closes on a happier note.

*Hence, shapes of death the natal day  
Of life and joy is here.  
Let wild woes flee and eyes let fall  
Glad tears, and grief keep festival  
And where she wept revere*

S. III 7, 131-5

Statius' hendecasyllables have not the lightness of those of Catullus—perhaps the perpetual spondees in the first foot are partly to blame for this—but they have a flow which matches their eloquence. The hexameter is Statius' favourite metre, and it is the hexameters containing his invocation to sleep (S. v. 4) which show his poetry at its highest. In lines of infinite delicacy and pathos he asks what he has done that sleep, "young sleep of all the gods the gentlest" should withhold his gifts from him alone. All things are at rest. The rounded mountain-tops make as though they slept. The voice of the brawling streams is changed, and seas no longer rough lie

pillowed on the breast of earth. Here for a moment he relapses into the mythological language which is a bar to modern appreciation of his poetry and complains that seven times Phœbe has revisited him and seven times Paphian and Cætean lamps have shone, and found him sleepless. But at the close he returns to simplicity. If, he says, there be somewhere some happy lover who would even banish sleep :

*Thence come—I do not ask that on these eyes  
Thou shouldst full-winged descend—for happier men  
Such prayer—, but with thy wand's extremity  
Touch—'twere enough—, or flutter lightly past.*

S v 4, 16-19.

Between Statius and the other most representative poet of the Flavian age, L. VALERIUS MARTIALIS, there was little in common. Statius' aspirations were bound up with the mythological epic. Martial was concerned with aspects of contemporary life. Only in his occasional poems can Statius' production be compared with that of his contemporary, and here the comparison shows a marked divergence in their methods. The note of Statius' *Silvæ* is amplification, that of Martial's epigrams conciseness. And it would seem that the poets were as antipathetic in temperament as they were divergent in literary methods. Though they moved in the same circles, and in many cases addressed the same patrons and treated the same subjects, neither mentions the other. This silence is especially remarkable in Martial who refers to so many of his literary contemporaries, for instance, Silius, Quintilian, Juvenal, and the younger Pliny. To Statius he perhaps makes a veiled allusion in an epigram in which he seems to lump him with the mass of irrelevant mythological poets, (X. iv. 3) and again

in another (IX. xix) in which he sneers at a writer who takes three-hundred lines to describe a bath.\* Martial's verses have been described as the quintessence of the Flavian period. For it was a materialistic age, and Martial was throughout, what Statius was only incidentally, a realist. It was characterised by verbal exactness and mechanical ingenuity, and these obtain their final triumph in the fine point to which Martial sharpens his conceptions.†

Martial was born about 40 A.D. at Bilbilis in Spain, being thus the fourth distinguished writer of the first century who was of Spanish birth. Coming to Rome in 63 or 64 A.D. when he was twenty-three, he attached himself, as was natural, to the eminent Spanish family of the Annæi. Their downfall a year or so later (65 A.D.) forced him to seek other patrons. Of his early life in Rome little is known. Now, as afterwards, he doubtless sought his living as the dependent of wealthy and distinguished persons, composing for their benefit some early poems of which later he thought little enough, (I. 113). When Titus inaugurated the Colosseum (80 A.D.) Martial presented to him a collection of epigrams‡ commemorating incidents in the games there celebrated. The privileges attaching to the father of three children (*ius trium liberorum*) were given him, although he was unmarried, by Titus and confirmed by Domitian, and an honorary military tribunate, probably conferred by the latter, carried with it the standing of a knight. For the

\* Statius' description of the bath of Claudius Etruscus (*Silvæ* i. 7.) contains it is true but 65 lines.

† Merivale, *Romans under the Empire*, vii 287.

‡ Commonly called *liber spectaculorum*, the title given by Gruter to distinguish it from the other books of epigrams.

Saturnalia of the year 84 or 85 he published two books, entitled *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, of mottoes in elegiac couplets for presents, afterwards incorporated with the epigrams and numbered Books 13 and 14. But it was not till about two years later (86 A.D.) that he published the first two books of epigrams. These were followed at intervals of about a year by nine others down to the year 97 A.D. when the eleventh appeared. Then after an interval of three years the twelfth was sent from Bilbilis to which Martial had returned in 101 A.D. He died not later than 104 A.D.

The epigrams in the "book of shows" are on incidents of ephemeral interest. The two-line mottoes for presents, which in the case of the *Xenia* are edibles, in that of the *Apophoreta* other miscellaneous objects from a pair of mules to an umbrella, a cook to a comb, though cleverly executed are necessarily unimportant. Martial's merits must be estimated with reference to the twelve books which precede these two. He claims that his writings possess human interest. "My page," says he, "smacks of humanity." In effect the epigrams are concerned not so much with humanity at large as with the scandals, the humours, the fashions, the follies, and the hypocrisies of Roman society in the poet's day. They present a gallery of Flavian types and Flavian eccentrics. And if men are a feature in Martial's epigrams so are things. It has been said that he is "the only writer in whom plate and tapestry, earthenware and hardware, beds and sofas, become truly poetic."\* At any rate he found them interesting, and this is the first condition of making them so. His method is to attain vividness by realistic detail. He uses no general expressions such as rich and

\* Verrall, *Literary Essays, Classical and Modern*, p. 15

poor, but speaks in terms of jewelry, scents, linen, cloaks, and boots. His epigrams contain enough dishes to furnish forth a cookery book, and on subjects such as Roman topography, books, and games, they are a mine of information.

The poet, who had no illusions about his work, says of one of his books that it contained "some good pieces, some middling, and more bad" The value of the epigrams varies a good deal. Are they ever actually funny? The word applies perhaps to the suggestion made to a long-winded speaker, who was always drinking to prevent himself from becoming hoarse, that he should take a pull at the water-clock \* (vi 35). There is humour in the epigram about the barrister who, engaged in a suit about the theft of three kids, thunders of Cannæ and the Mithridatic war, and is gently recalled to the subject in the final line. "And now, Postumus, speak about the three kids" (vi. 19). But as a rule the epigrams show more of wit than humour, often wit of a somewhat mordant kind. This will serve as an instance—

*You honour, Vacerra, the ancients alone,  
And never praise poets unless dead and gone  
Your pardon, if unceremonious I seem,  
But it's not worth while dying to gain your esteem.*

viii 69

Still more sardonic is the following :

*Since you are similarly curst,  
Of wives, of husbands, each the worst,  
Upon my word I cannot see  
Why you don't perfectly agree*

viii. 35

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\* Which regulated the length of his speech.

Many are as trivial as they are brief. For instance :

*Chloe weeps with one eye. Do you ask how it's done?  
The answer is easy she has only one*

iv 65

It should be remarked incidentally that in the epigrams which may be described as skits the names are imaginary. For the most part they are chosen merely with reference to their suitability to the metre employed, though sometimes tell-tale names are used ; for instance, Eulogus (Mr Plausible) for an auctioneer. Thus Martial claims—that

*'Tis my constant care  
To lash the vices, but the persons spare.*

x 33<sup>1</sup>

But trivial or not, they are without exception admirable in execution. Martial names as his predecessors Catullus among the poets of the Republic, Maecius and Pedo of the Augustan age, and Gætulicus, who was killed in the reign of Caligula. The Augustan epigrammatists have left practically nothing ; but a few epigrams, probably attributed to Seneca, and some by Petronius still survive. But it is on the whole true to say that Martial made the modern epigram, that is to say, the short poem with a point. Catullus' elegiac and iambic pasquinades are pungent and incisive, but he redoubles his insults †. Seneca makes rhetorical conceits throughout. The epigrams of Petronius have rather the character of the Greek epigram in that they have unity and conciseness but not exactly point.‡ Martial's art on the contrary is most characteristically shown in the pieces

<sup>1</sup> Hay, quoted by H. E. Butler

† In Catullus C. 84, the point is contained in the final line

‡ H. E. Butler, *Post-Augustan Poetry*, p. 259

in which, after indicating the circumstances with strict economy of language, but without the omission of any touch which may subserve the culminating effect, he finally raps out the point towards which he has been working always with supreme conciseness, sometimes in a single word \*. For instance, the melancholy of Silius (II. 11), humorously described, is finally explained by the words "he is dining at home" (*domi cenat*), or the poet, after describing how Tongilius is reported ill and receives many delicacies in consequence, finally apostrophises the doctors with the words

*You fools, what you take for a fever is greed*

II 40

The point, indeed, often consists in applying, as here, the true term to proceedings which have been described, often in emphasising a contrast or an incongruity, in plays on words, *doubles ententes*, and unexpected turns

But many of Martial's pieces are not epigrams in the restricted meaning of the term. Besides the skits on persons with fictitious names the collection comprises a number of epigrams, mostly of a complimentary character, addressed or referring to persons who are named, the Emperor himself, members of his court, other patrons or friends. They may be letters, congratulations, good wishes, condolences, epitaphs. In the latter, of which there are twenty-five, point is less appropriate than pathos. The gem of this class is that on the six-year-old child Erotion, eight lines full of delicate tenderness, fitly closing with the prayer.

*Rest on her lightly, O earth, lightly she rested on thee*

V 34



Not a few of the epigrams show a vivid descriptive power. Such are the delightful scazon iambs on Apollinaris' villa at Formiæ (x. 30), and such the still more charming hendecasyllables on his friend Julius Martialis' "little place" on the Janiculum (iv. 64), with its clear air and radiant sunshine, its glorious view of the seven imperial hills and the slopes of Alba and Tusculum, and many a storied site in the Campagna, while nearer at hand one can descry the chariots on the Flaminian road, the barges on the Tiber, and yet hear neither the rumble of wheels nor the shouts of the men who are towing

In poems such as these, point does not occupy the same place as in the pasquinades, yet these too are apt to close with a pithy sentiment,\* and these too have unity sometimes accentuated by the device of recurring at the close to the initial line,† but never absent. Formal perfection is matched by metrical neatness. Martial's favourite metre is the elegiac distich, in which three-fourths of his epigrams, without reckoning the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, are written. Here he is the follower of Ovid from whom he has no scruple in borrowing whole lines. But Martial's concentration on the exact expression of his meaning, while it makes him less exacting as to the dissyllabic conclusion of the pentameter, saves him from falling into the artificial tricks of his prototype, and gives his couplet a perhaps superior solidity and conciseness. Of other metres there are practically but two, the hendecasyllabic and the scazontic, and in these Martial's master is Catullus. His adherence to the long syllable in the opening of the former gives his lines, masterly as they are, an air of precision which distinguishes them from the negligent grace of the Catullan hendecasyllable.

*Eg* 1 15, vii 32

† *Eg* iv 64, vii. 17

As for the scazon the calculated interruption of the iambic cadence which is its characteristic feature makes it a suitable vehicle for satiric verse, and the tang of Martial's epigrams often coincides effectively with the final spondee.\* Yet the poem on Apollinaris' villa already mentioned shows that, like Catullus in his Sirmio (c 31) Martial could use this metre to call up a beautiful picture as well as to express malicious intent.

The impression given of Martial by his epigrams is not altogether favourable. It may be urged against him that he was coarse, a flatterer, and a mendicant. A large number, more than ten per cent., of his epigrams are obscene. The author's apology that such was the tradition of the genre, and that though his page was wanton his life was respectable, held good in his day, and suffices still as a partial vindication of his character, but cannot make them tolerable to modern readers. His relations to his social superiors were certainly undignified. Flattery of the Emperor was *de rigueur*, but Martial carries it far when he declares that he would rather dine with Domitian than with Jupiter,† and his declaration that under no Emperor was there so much freedom‡ was glaring contradiction with the facts. He does not conceal that for eulogies he expects a substantial return. Those who ignored the obligation thus created he bluntly characterised as cheats.§

It is not fair to infer that with him gratitude was always "a keen sense of favours to come", but when Arruntius Stella has sent him some tiles to roof his country house

E g., I x 4, *quid ergo in illa petitur et placet?* Tussat

† ix 91

∩ 19

§ IV xl 10

he thinks it a suitable moment to ask for an addition to his wardrobe.

*The farmhouse you cover, the farmer you don't*

vii 36

As for the effrontery of his appeal to another patron, Regulus, it is almost sublime.

*There is only one way to replenish my coffers*

*I must e'en sell the presents you gave me. What offers?*

vii 16

But the position of a needy man of letters in Martial's day was a demoralising one. Turn to those aspects of his life in which his inclinations had free play and he appears in a far more favourable light. His fine tribute to the qualities of his friend Decimus (i. 39), his retrospect of thirty-four years of friendship with Julius Martialis (xii 34), his good wishes for the wedded happiness of the centurion Pudens (iv 13), show that in his relations with his equals he was warm-hearted and sincere. His ideals were not high, but they were natural and not discreditable.

*What makes a happy life, dear friend,  
If thou wouldst briefly learn, attend—  
An income left, not earned by toil,  
Some acres of a kindly soil,  
The pot unfauling on the fire,  
No law-suits, seldom town attire,  
Health, strength with grace, a peaceful mind,  
Shrewdness with honesty combined,  
Plain living, equal friends and few,  
Evenings of temperate gaiety,  
A wife discreet yet blithe and bright,  
Sound slumber that lends wings to night  
With all thy heart embrace thy lot,  
Wish not for death, and fear it not."*

x. 47.

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<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith, quoted by H. E. Butler.

For the country he had a genuine love ; not for the world of smart country houses, though this, too, he could appreciate ; but the genuine unsophisticated country (*vero rure barbaroque*) with "grubby children," cocks and hens, smoky ceilings, and rude plenty. This feeling is intimately blended with his love for his native land, with its imposing nature (I. xlix. 3) and uncouth names (iv. 55), with which half in jest and half in pride he bombards the ears of Roman Lucius. To this land he returned too late to find all, but still in time to find something, of that for which he had looked. In a poem addressed to Juvenal, whom he imagines as still scouring the streets of Rome, he tells how he enjoys "a vast unconscionable sleep" and recoups himself for all the wakeful hours of thirty years, how on rising he is welcomed by a fire replenished by a "glorious pile" of oak logs from the wood hard by, and concludes:

*So would I wish to live and so to die.*

XII 18.

Martial credits his readers with the sentiment

*You don't admire me, but I think you like me*

Book 9, Præf

The aspects of his character which have been just considered might incline them to admit the imputation

## XVI

### THE REIGNS OF NERVA AND TRAJAN

PERHAPS it would not be true to say that there was a revival of literature after the fall of Domitian. But it certainly became more expressive of the serious thought of the day. The reawakening of history and oratory was rendered possible by the "rare felicity of the times when one may think what one pleases and write what one thinks." The appearance at this moment of one of the greatest of Roman historians is not so easily to be explained. But of the conditions under which his talents were formed, some account may be given.

PUBLIUS CORNELIUS TACITUS, born 55 or 56 A. D., though not a member of the high nobility, seems to have belonged to the second order in the state, being probably son or nephew of a Roman knight of the same name mentioned by Pliny, as controller of the Imperial finance in Belgic Gaul. Destined for a legal and perhaps a political career he studied eloquence with a fervour which recalls that of Cicero. He attached himself to the two most eminent barristers of the day, and attended them not only in the courts but at their homes. His application was not unrewarded. When his friend the younger Pliny, some seven or eight years his junior, made his *début*, Tacitus already enjoyed a high reputation as an orator. Success favoured his social and political advancement. He married the

daughter of Julius Agricola, now (77 A.D.) consul, and shortly to proceed to the province of Britain. About the same time he entered on the career of a senator, and was successively advanced by Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, under the last of whom he was prætor (88 A.D.) and keeper of the Sibylline books. After his year of office as prætor he was absent from Rome for four years (89-93 A.D.), perhaps as governor of Belgic Gaul. On his return he found in progress that reign of terror in which the rule of Domitian closed. The memory of the three years which followed left an ineffaceable impression on Tacitus' mind. Under its influence he referred to the whole fifteen years of Domitian's reign as so much cut out of life, years during which "young men have become old, and old men have reached the term and limit of human existence" At some time in these years of silence Tacitus resolved to turn from oratory to history. In an early work, his dialogue on oratory, he made one of the interlocutors express the view that monarchy was incompatible with the brightest eloquence, but supplied a compensation in the greater happiness which it secured. But what kind of happiness was to be found in those three years during which Domitian "drained the lifeblood of the state?" When it became possible to speak out he declared\* that there would be a certain satisfaction in having composed "a record of past slavery, and a testimony to present happiness," an account, that is, of the reign of Domitian and the beginning of the rule of Nerva. In the meantime, as if to shape a style which he apprehended was at present "rough and unpolished," he published in quick succession two minor works, the first (97 or 98 A.D.), a life of his father-in-law Agricola, who

\* Agricola, iii. 3.

had died before his return to Rome, the second (98 A D), a monograph on Germany, a country always interesting to the Romans and especially so now, when the new Emperor Trajan was engaged in securing the northern frontier of the Empire. But when the "Histories" were given to the world\* they did not contain an account of the reign of Nerva nor of the opening years of Trajan. This subject Tacitus now announces (H I I) he had reserved for his old age. On the other hand he went back further than the reign of Domitian, and included the reigns of the first two Flavian Emperors, and the events of the year 69 A D, which brought the Flavian dynasty to the top. This work he followed† later by the *Annals*, a history of the Julian Emperors from Tiberius to Nero, and it appeared (*Annals* III. 24) that he intended, when this was finished, to write the history of the reign of Augustus. Thus, though the last-mentioned project was not realised, Tacitus' analytic mind was carried further and further back in the effort to explain recent conditions by previous events. The "testimony to the present happiness" was never given, and the history of the Julian and Flavian Emperors was written in the spirit induced by "the past slavery."

Tacitus' career as an orator and an official was resumed after the death of Domitian. As consul in 97 A D, he delivered an eloquent funeral oration on Virginius Rufus, the great soldier citizen, to whose place he succeeded. Three years later he was associated with Pliny in the prosecution of Marius Priscus, pro-consul of Africa, the Verres of imperial times. An inscription shows that he was himself pro-consul of Asia, probably between 110

They probably appeared in successive books, 104-109 A D

† Between 115 and 117 A D

and 114 A.D. But his official career is of little importance as compared with his literary life, and of this the completion of the *Annals* in A.D. 115 or 116, was the culminating point.

Such was the genesis of the three minor and the two greater works of Tacitus. It remains to say something of each. The *Dialogue on Orators* (*dialogus de oratoribus*) purports to be the record of a conversation held by Marcus Aper and Julius Secundus, the two orators to whom Tacitus attached himself in youth, Maternus, a barrister who had abandoned law for poetry, and Vipstanus Messalla, a soldier and man of action as well as an orator. Aper acclaims the orator's and Maternus the poet's life. On the entrance of Messalla the former challenges him by some strictures on ancient eloquence; but the speakers who follow assume and seek to discover the causes of its superiority to that of the moderns. Messalla finds these causes in the better upbringing of children, formerly conducted by their mothers, now delegated to slaves, in the wider conception formerly entertained of education, and in a technical training more in touch with reality: Julius Secundus in the more inspiring conditions which obtained under Republican government.

The matter of the dialogue is interesting, notably the description of old Roman education; and the lively presentations of the blustering self-made man in Aper, the idealist in Maternus, of the aristocratic conservative in Messalla, give a hint of the skill in character-drawing which was to distinguish Tacitus' later works. The flowing Ciceronian style in which the dialogue is written is in such marked contrast to Tacitus' later manner as to involve a literary problem, hardly soluble except on the



presumption of an early date for the work.\* It may reflect the influence of Quintilian, who was not improbably Tacitus' teacher. But significant in view of the later development of his prose, are the observations put into the mouth of Aper, that "new styles must be developed to meet new conditions" (c. 19), that "nowadays poetic imagery is expected even in a speech" (c. 20), and that Cicero lacks point † (c. 22), and, despite the predominantly Ciceronian character of the writing, here and there—as where it is said of Augustus that "he had pacified everything—eloquence included,"‡ or that "the eloquence of the Gracchi did not compensate the country for having to endure their laws,"§ appear indications of the epigrammatic manner which was the note of Tacitus' matured style

The life and character of *Agricola* (*de vita et moribus Julii Agricolae*) is the earliest artistic biography which we possess; for the biographical notices of Nepos do not enter into competition with it. As such it is differentiated from a long series of successors by one merit, and associated with them by one defect. The merit is brevity, and the defect an unduly eulogistic tone. Yet for the latter there was in this case a special reason. The life was not indeed the eulogy which Tacitus had been pre-

The dramatic date of the dialogue was 75 A.D. It probably appeared not very long after this date, in any case before Titus' death in 81 A.D. The view of Norden (*Antike Kunstprosa*, p. 322), that the dialogue is a mere exercise in style produced not long before the *Agricola*, and that it is to be left outside the consideration of the development of Tacitus' style, is not generally supported.

† *Pauci sensus apte et cum quodam lumine terminantur. Nihil ex capere, nihil referre possis.*

‡ c. 38, *eloquentiam sicut omnia alia pacaverat.*

§ c. 40, *nec tanti reipublicæ Gracchorum eloquentia fuit ut pateretur et leges.*

vented by absence from pronouncing at Agricola's funeral, although the conclusion with its noble apostrophe has a rhetorical character surprising in biography and perhaps not unconnected with the fact that it was the work of an orator lately turned historian. But it was deliberately written "to do honour" \* to its subject, to give their true value to achievements which the writer held to have been ill requited, and to qualities which an unobtrusive demeanour had caused to be insufficiently realised. It is only the former which he rates too highly. On the whole the life presents a sympathetic picture of an efficient, tactful, unassuming though not unambitious man. Agricola's claim to greatness rested on his achievements during his command in Britain (78-85 A.D.) Consequently this part of his life is told at length: with an account of Britain and of Roman operations there down to the time of Agricola's arrival, it occupies the great bulk of the book. But the events if told at length are not set forth with precision. For Tacitus is an unmilitary historian at all times and here his concern is biography. In indicating the six campaigns (78-83 A.D.), he hardly mentions a name. Little is distinctly stated except that in the year of his arrival Agricola subdued the Ordovices in North Wales and the island of Anglesea, that in his fourth campaign (81 A.D.) he advanced to the line of the Firth of Clyde, and made good that line with a series of forts and that his operations culminated in a battle on the "Graupian Mount" as to the situation of which nothing is known except that it was beyond the Forth. This battle is described with all the arts of rhetoric. It is preceded by speeches from the Caledonian chief Calgacus and Agricola, into the mouth of the former of whom Tacitus has put

\* *libet honoris Agricolæ societati meæ destinatus*, c. 3, fin.

two of his best known epigrams, that referring to the splendours of the unknown (*omne ignotum pro magnifico*)\* and the barbarian's description of Roman methods of conquest. "when they make a solitude they call it peace."†

The treatise on Germany (*de Germania*) has been variously characterised as a satire, a political manifesto, and an excursus written for insertion in the Histories. The last description, which implies more as to the genesis of the treatise than its content, can hardly be true of it in its present form. It is too long. The *Germany* would seem to have been, like the *Agricola*, an "interim" work, and from the literary point of view something of an experiment. It may well have been called forth by the interest felt in Germany at a time when the new Emperor Trajan was engaged in securing the northern frontier, and the true policy as regards Germany was being canvassed at Rome. And it is quite likely that Tacitus used material which he had already collected with a view to the Histories and might use again in another form. But he does not recommend a policy, though he is clearly convinced, and in one chapter (xxxvii) gives definite expression to the conviction, that Germany is a danger to Rome. He says of the Germans "neither the Samnites nor the Carthaginians, neither Spain nor Gaul, have given us more frequent warnings. Free Germany is a more strenuous foe than the Arsacid despotism." This lesson he emphasises by showing how virile and uncorrupted the race was. Hence the insistence, conformable to Tacitus' satiric bent, on the contrasts between German and Roman society. When he says "in Germany no one laughs at vice, nor is mutual corruption called the

fashion," or observes that there "it does not pay to be childless," he is undoubtedly glancing at the different state of things which prevailed at Rome. Such observations have their place in the book; but it was not written that they might be made. Much less is the *Germany* an idyll. Though primitive conditions have for Tacitus something of the attraction they are apt to possess for highly civilised societies, he is quite alive to the failings of the Germans, to their want of discipline and dislike of work, their propensity to gambling and drink. Lit with flashes of satire, and revealing here and there a patriotic concern, the treatise on Germany is what it purports to be, an independent work. It is an account of the geography, ethnography and natural products of that country, and of the institutions, religious and political, and the social life of the Germans at large, followed by a description of particular tribes, of whom some forty-five are mentioned. Vague in its geography, it betrays in the account of political and social institutions some inconsistencies due to the attempt to make general statements about tribes which were at different stages of development. But in its large features it is correct. The picture of the vast land with its "shaggy forests and dreary swamps" is stimulating to the imagination. The figures of Odin or Thor, obscured by hasty identification of Teutonic with Italian deities, arrest the student of religion, and vanishing traces of primitive or already recognisable features of mediæval society are of value to the historical investigator. "With all its shortcomings no similar monograph of such fullness and value has come down to us."\*

The two great historical works to which Tacitus owes

\* *De Germania*, ed. by Furneaux, p. 33

his reputation are the *Histories* and the *Annals*. The *Histories*, as, in accordance with Sallustian precedent and the general practice of the Romans, the earlier work is called, since it dealt with a period which fell within the writer's own experience, narrated events from the beginning of the year 69 A D to the death of Domitian. The *Annals* chronicled the history of the Empire from the death of Augustus (64 A D) to that of Nero (68) or perhaps down to the point at which the *Histories* open. This work is referred to by Tacitus himself as "Annals," in view of the fact that it narrated events comparatively remote and narrated them on strictly annalistic principles; but its formal title was "From the death of Augustus" (*ab excessu divi Augusti*). *Annals* and *Histories* together numbered, we are told, thirty books,\* and if, as is on the whole most probable, the sixteenth book of the *Annals*, which is incomplete, was the last, there must have been fourteen books of the *Histories*. Of these, only four-and-a-half books survive, covering a period of not quite two years. But into these years is crowded a tremendous succession of events. The first three books are devoted to the year 69 A D and in each an Emperor meets his death, Galba in the first, Otho in the second, and Vitellius in the third. The fourth is mainly occupied with an account of the revolt of the Batavians under Civilis, continued but not completed in the fifth, the opening chapters of which give an account of the Jews, and of the preparations for the siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

Of these two great works the earlier is perhaps the more successful. Tacitus was about fifteen when the events described in the first three books took place, and the vividness with which he has depicted not a few scenes of

<sup>i</sup> Jerome, *Comm. in Zachariam*, III. 14

the eventful year make it probable that he was recording the impressions of an eye-witness. Who but such could have described as he does the temper of the crowd in the forum at the moment before the murder of Galba? "There was," he writes, "neither tumult nor peace, but the silence of a great fear and a great anger" (xli. 40). And when he narrates how, when Flavian and Vitellianist met in the Campus, Martius and the onlookers applauded and encouraged the combatants, and comments on the inhuman callousness which looked on the conflict as but an added excitement to the enjoyment of a holiday (iii. 8) it is difficult to believe that he is not telling us what he saw and what he felt at the moment.\*

The horror of civil war is forcibly expressed, nowhere more forcibly than in the tale of the sack of Cremona, which, as told by Tacitus, is one of the most frightful pages in history. And not only its horror but its guilt and wilful waste. This feeling speaks in Tacitus' retrospect of the history of the colony, "unharmful by foreign, but unfortunate in intestine wars" (iii. 34), and still more poignantly in his comment on the burning of the Capitol: "This was the most deplorable and shameful event which had befallen the commonwealth of Rome, since the foundation of the city. Assailed by no foreign foe, with heaven ready to be kind if only our vices had allowed, the seat of the supreme Jupiter, founded by our ancestors with solemn auspices to be the pledge of Empire, which neither Porsena at the surrender of the city nor the Gaul at its capture had been able to violate, was destroyed by the madness of our Emperors" (iii. 72).

In the *Histories* Tacitus had a great canvas to fill, for the

disturbances which converged on Rome were world-wide, and he discharges his task to admiration. His survey of "the state of the city, the temper of the armies, and the condition of the provinces" at the opening of the work anticipates the power of extended purview which is one of the signal qualities of Gibbon.

Against these merits there is to be set one weakness. The story unfolded in the surviving portion of the histories is largely a story of military movements, and Tacitus has been characterised by Mommsen as "the most unmilitary of writers." He gives us rhetorical descriptions of battles, but of strategy and tactics he has the vaguest conception. The attempt of the Vitellians to penetrate the Othoman line of defence along the Po is interpreted as a futile device for keeping the troops employed, Otho's daring plan for enveloping the Vitellian position at Cremona by throwing an army west of the city while its place was taken by the legions advancing from Aquileia as a brainless attempt to precipitate a battle, and his retirement to Buxellum to control the combined movement as an act of cowardice.\* The fact is Tacitus did not care about these things, nor did his readers. He is an artist and a moralist; and military movements are slurred, being regarded as interesting only so far as they provide matters for rhetoric or are significant of character.

In the *Annals* psychological analysis has full play. The first six books contain an elaborate character-study of the Emperor Tiberius. And generally one may imagine that Tacitus set himself to discover how it was that the loyalty which had been felt for the Julian house waned, and how the Empire ceased to be "the inheritance

\* Henderson, *Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire*, pp 92-114

of a single family," and found the answer in the fact that an arch-dissimulator was succeeded by a madman, and a fool by a monster

Not that the characters of Claudius and Nero (the books relating to Caligula are lost) either required or received such elaborate treatment as that of Tiberius. But a rapid survey of the last six books (xI-xvI) will show that they were adapted to bring another aptitude of the historian into play. First, in the fragmentary eleventh book, come the dominance and the fall of Messalina; in the next (xII) the central figure is Agrippina, swayed by ambition as Messalina had been by wantonness. She secures the place of empress for herself and the imperial succession for her son by a series of ruthless intrigues crowned by the murder of Claudius himself. Nemesis befalls her. Then follows (xIII) the struggle for supremacy between Agrippina and Nero and her assumption of the cause of Britannicus, which results in the murder of the latter foreshadowing her own. The matricide (xIV) is followed by the rapid demoralisation of Nero. Burrus dies and Seneca is discarded. Tigellinus and Poppœa are supreme. Nero marries the latter, divorcing and subsequently murdering his wife Octavia. He sinks yet lower (xV). His appearance on the stage and signal profligacy are followed by the great fire at Rome and the conspiracy of Piso, "a great enterprise and a great fiasco." The last book (xVI), which is incomplete, is concerned with the aftermath of the conspiracy, the most notable features of it being the death of Petronius and the endeavour of Nero to "destroy virtue herself" in the persons of Pætus Thrasea and Barea Soranus. It has been said that Tacitus was "born to be a tragic poet." It will be seen that each of the last six books of the *Annals*



furnishes matter for a tragedy, and it is only owing to the loss of the close of the work that the final catastrophe is wanting.

The above brief indication of the main current of events in the *Annals* shows that Tacitus' attention is centred on the palace; and, in truth, for him the heart of his subject is here. The monarchy is the great fact of the time, and such political wisdom as Tacitus has to inculcate consists in indicating how to live without loss of self-respect under the monarchy, an achievement which he holds possible, given prudence—and luck. As chronicler of the events of the period he has, of course, to tell of wars on the frontiers, of campaigns against Germany under Tiberius, against Parthia under Nero. But his eye is always on Rome. Germanicus is a foil to Tiberius, Corbulo to Nero. It is this absorption in the affairs of the capital which is largely responsible for the gloom of Tacitus' narrative. He has no thought for the increased happiness of the provinces, and gives no hint of the efficient government of the Empire. His senatorial sympathies tend to produce in him the same result, for it was the senatorial class in the main which suffered under the Empire. It was to the aristocracy that Tacitus looked for virtue, and found servility.

Yet, if his outlook is limited, the story he tells is on the whole not untrue. He was probably incorrect in conceiving that Tiberius was evil from the first, that for a time he succeeded in concealing vices and feigning virtues, but that eventually he allowed his true nature to appear. A more plausible explanation of Tiberius' deterioration is that which sees in it the effect of increasing isolation on a mind penetrating but irresolute. But the account which Tacitus gives of the Emperors is in the main con-

firmed by such writers as survive, with the exception of those who are obviously interested flatterers; and he is no "traducer of humanity," as Napoleon called him. His aim was to glorify virtue as well as to hold up vice to the reprobation of posterity, but the fact is, there were more vices than virtues to tell of. Tacitus took pains to discover the truth, and is, if anything, too meticulous in balancing explanations and rejecting none. He tries, however, to penetrate appearances, and a mind pessimistic and disillusioned makes him not too charitable in the imputation of motives. Moreover he is not only a moralist but an artist. That which is horrible he places before his readers in all its horror, and, as has been seen, the horrible predominates.

In art, indeed, the *Annals* show an advance on the *Histories*. Graphic as are many passages in the earlier work, the great scenes in the *Annals*—the visit of the Roman army to the stricken field of the Varian disaster, the arrival of the vessel bearing the ashes of Germanicus, the marriage of Messalina and Silius, the attempt to murder Agrippina, and the hurried consultation between Nero and his ministers on the failure of the plot—these and others are elaborated with a skill even more consummate.

In both there is the same visualising power, the same faculty for brilliant characterisation, the same unerring selection of significant detail. "Two privates undertook to transfer the government of the Roman people—and did it." There is the disorganisation of the year of chaos in a sentence. "For four-and-twenty hours the world was at the orders of a freedman." There is the rule of Claudius' in all its feebleness.\*

\* Both instances are given by Pichon, *Hist. Lat. Lit.*, p. 692.

Apophthegm is a feature of all Roman and especially all Imperial literature. But the apophthegms of Tacitus are distinguished by their brilliance, their bitterness, and the knowledge of human nature which they condense. A few instances will suffice · "Wrong a man and you will hate him" . \* "No feuds like family feuds" : † "Kindnesses are welcome so long as there is a prospect of repaying them , beyond that they meet not with gratitude but resentment " ‡ Nor are they always bitter There is, for instance, Tiberius' sardonic plea for religious tolerance, " Heaven's wrongs are Heaven's affair." § A Tacitean metaphor, " the sinews of war," || has been naturalised in English, while the happiest oxymoron ever made in English, " conspicuous by his absence," was, or at any rate might have been, due to Tacitean suggestion ¶

In its ultimate development the style of Tacitus, largely modelled on that of a kindred spirit, Sallust, but conforming to the manner cultivated in the rhetorical schools of the day, is so highly individual as to be unique Above all things it is concise, and conciseness is attained not so much by the employment of short sentences \*\* as by the elimination of all superfluous words, and the substitution

<sup>1</sup> *Proprium humani generis est odisse quem laeseris* Agr xlin 4

† *Acerrima proximorum odia* H IV lxx 3

‡ *Nam beneficia es usque lata sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse, ubi multum anteveneri pro gratia odium redditur* A. IV xviii 3

§ *Decorum iniurias dis curæ* A I 73

|| *Belli civilis nervos* H II lxxiv 1

¶ *Praefulgebant Cassius atque Brutus eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visabantur* H iii 76

<sup>12</sup> The sentence in which Tacitus sums up the circumstances and the methods which raised Augustus to supremest power is very long, but, if regard be had to the context, a marvel of compression — *Annals*, I ii 1 *Postquam Bruto . . . mallent.*

of adjectives, participles and substantives for conditional and relative sentences. The impression given is always that of pregnancy, never, as is sometimes the case with Sallust, of meagreness. Hardly less characteristic is the deliberate avoidance of balance and parallelism in sentence structure. This feature, which, shared by Tacitus with Sallust, became increasingly marked in Tacitus as his style developed, is due partly to a contempt for prettiness and the refusal to subordinate thought to form, partly to the desire to stimulate and arrest the attention. Tacitus has no mind to write sentences of which the reader can foresee the conclusion when he is half-way through them. From all this it will be evident that orderly and harmoniously constructed periods are rare. Yet Tacitus can write them, and does so when the mood requires. Thus the period is not banished; but the principle of irregularity is set beside that of harmonious arrangement. In following the equable march of military operations, Tacitus' writing is more periodic than where he is narrating urban affairs with satiric intent, just as, in accordance with oratorical exigencies, it is more balanced in the speeches than the narrative, and there are again passages of deliberate impressiveness \* written in perfectly balanced periods, and others, † where a special appeal is made to the emotions, in which Tacitus does not scorn the aid of elaborate parallelism and figures of speech. But, on the whole, the structure of his sentences is conditioned by the eminently pictorial character of his style. Substantive and adjective supply the colours, and these he flings on his canvas with seeming aimlessness but unerring effect, while in

\* *Eg*, Germanicus' army on the scene of the Varian slaughter  
A I lxii 1

† *Eg*, *H* iii. 83 Rome during the conflict of Flavians and Vitellianists.

the use of the verb, whose function in the sentence is structural, he shows an economy almost suggestive of contempt. In his use of the devices of contemporary rhetoric he is sparing, but he shows these at their best. He requires close attention ; but he is not among those "who don't think themselves clever unless cleverness is required to understand them." His style is pointed ; but he is not one of those who "say everything as if it were an epigram." His apophthegms are not too frequent, but they are brilliant, and not only brilliant but wise. Yet others could make epigrams. "The greatest merit of Tacitus is the uniformly high level of writing which he maintains throughout. "There is scarcely one dull sentence or lifeless phrase in all his works."\* His style is eloquent of his personality. Of this a marked element is what his friend noted as the characteristic of his oratory, dignity. It betrays itself in some circumlocutions which conflict with his habitual effort at conciseness, as also in the poetical and especially Virgilian tinge of his diction. He is charged with repressed emotion, with melancholy, uncertainty, disgust, and this is in part the reason why his writing exhibits the antithesis to the serene and abundant flow of Livy, resting in pleased contemplation of the achievements and the virtues of the greatest nation upon earth.

With Tacitus, *JUVENAL* (*Decimus Junius Juvenalis*) is associated in more than one respect. Both are masters of satire, though the former is a satiric historian, the latter a writer of satiric poems ; both give a sombre picture of the times which they describe, both regret the disappearance of a dignified ideal of Roman manhood. But

Ramsay (*Tac. Annals*, I lxx), from whose introductory chapters I have derived not a few suggestions

the historian is an aristocrat occupied with high politics and concerned at the decadence of the Senate, the satirist a *bourgeois* who gives voice to the grievances of humble folk.

It might have been thought that thirteen lives were enough to elucidate the career of any man; but the lives, no fewer in number, which are preserved with the manuscripts of Juvenal are vague in statement (no one of them mentions the date of his birth), contradictory, and late. Twelve of them are probably derivative, and the only one which is likely to be original does not date from earlier than the time of the Theodosii (350-450 A.D.). One statement in the latter may be accepted, and that is that Juvenal was born at Aquinum and practised declamation until middle life. That he was a declaimer is confirmed by the character of his writings, and that he long continued to do so is in accordance with indications given by more trustworthy sources than the Lives. His friend Martial, in an epigram written in 92 A.D. (Ep. 7) addresses him as "eloquent," but makes no reference to his having written satires. It seems that he knew him as rhetorician only, and also as a *flâneur* and a frequenter of the houses of rich men, for, writing in 102 A.D., after his own return to his native land, he imagined Juvenal as still going on the old round (Ep. XII. 18). It may be observed that Juvenal includes himself among the clients (S. 1. 101). The indications of date in the *Satires* show that they appeared between 100 and 130 A.D. In the first of them Juvenal writes as one no longer young (1. 25), and in the eleventh (XI. 203) as an old man. The best of the Lives states that he lived till the age of eighty. Approximately his life must have covered the period 60-140 A.D.

Beyond this difficulties thicken. An inscription discovered at Aquinum, but since lost, recorded how one

Junius Juvenalis, tribune of a cohort in the Dalmatian legion, Mayor of Aquinum and priest of Vespasian, dedicated an offering at the "Helvian" temple of Ceres. If the Juvenal in question is identical with the poet he must have combined with his life in Rome some military service and the tenure of municipal office. The last is not impossible. Juvenal, while living at Rome, sometimes returned to his native place, and as son or foster-son of a wealthy freedman, which the Lives declare him to have been, he might have afforded the expenses entailed by the offices in question. But about the military career there are more difficulties, Juvenal writes as a civilian and apparently disliked soldiers. On the whole it is more likely that the inscription refers to one of his relations than to himself.

As to the statements in the Lives that the poet was exiled for offending the actor Paris by a passage in his *Satires* (vii. 87-9), there is so much discrepancy in the details and so much difficulty in accepting any one of the divergent accounts, that it is probable that they merely represent attempts to supplement, by conjectures based on the *Satires*, a tradition which, not being itself derived from these, may very possibly be genuine. The solution of such questions is not vital to the understanding of Juvenal. Whether a poet was mayor or not does not greatly matter to posterity, and his treatment by the government of the day, if sufficiently important to himself at the time, is less so to his readers.

About the *Satires* themselves there is no ambiguity. Juvenal explains in the first why he writes, and why he writes satire. He writes because he is bored by listening to mythological poems, and he writes satire because the age supplies so much material that it is difficult not to

write it. Resentment supplies him with inspiration. His subject is the doings of men. If he may not be outspoken about contemporaries, as Lucilius was, he will see at any rate if he will be allowed to satirise the dead.

This programme (which refers more particularly to the first book) is carried out in the first three books (1-5, 6, 7-9) of the *Satires*. Juvenal rails against grievances; those of poor and honest men at Rome (3), of clients (5) and of all who are engaged in intellectual pursuits (7). He gibbets vices, those of men, whether hypocritical philosophers or degenerate nobles (2), or debauchees (9), those of women in the longest of his *Satires* (6), which is a comprehensive tirade against female shamelessness. The names mentioned, with the exception of an exiled provincial governor and quite obscure individuals, are those of persons now dead. Nowhere is there such an assemblage of them as in the burlesque account of a cabinet council under Domitian (4) which illustrates the servility of the times.

But the satires of the two last books (10-12, 13-16) are both in subject and tone of a different character. The transition is, indeed, already foreshadowed in the eighth Satire, included in the third book, which deals with the thesis that virtue is the only true nobility. Like this the *Satires* of the fourth and fifth books are concerned in the main with abstract subjects, such as the true object of prayer (10), the desire for revenge (13), or the influence of parental example (14). More diffuse in treatment they are more reflective and less acrimonious in tone, though strictures on extravagance in eating precede an invitation to a frugal dinner (11), and a description of cannibalism in Egypt (15) a disquisition on humanity, while the writers' disinterested rejoicing at a friend's escape from shipwreck is followed by an attack on will hunters (12). It is



only in the last Satire (16), which sets forth, in effect, the grievances of civilians in view of the privileged position of the soldier, that Juvenal returns to his earlier manner.

So marked is the difference that it has suggested the theory that these later Satires were not by Juvenal at all. The resemblances, however, outweigh the differences. The later Satires stand in the same kind of relation to the earlier as the Epistles of Horace to his Satires, their epistolary character is indicated by the fact that all except the tenth are, at least ostensibly,\* addressed to friends, and it has been well remarked † that had Juvenal chosen to call them epistles the question of authenticity would never have been raised.

Juvenal's place in the development of satire is determined by his training as a declaimer and his temper as a moralist. The influence of rhetorical education is one of the leading facts in the literary history of the Empire, and it is not surprising that in the hands of its latest exponent satire should have become declamatory. Necessarily it also became less conversational, and thus lost, or almost lost,‡ the feature of dialogue which in Horace and his imitator Persius still recalled its far-off origin in drama. On the other hand another feature of satire, the informality due to its derivation from a plotless play, may conceivably account for a tendency to digress and a weakness in construction § which are undeniable in

\* The names may be imaginary.

† By J. D. Duff, *Satires of Juvenal*, Intro. xxix.

‡ There is a fragment of dialogue in S. I. 1. 150 ff. S. III is in form a dialogue, but all the talking is done by one person. S. IV is a true dialogue.

§ S. I. is a list of grievances, S. VI, a series of portraits. In many satires there is artificiality, rather than absence, of connection. Two subjects are awkwardly combined in *Satires* IV, XI, XII, XIV, XV.

Juvenal's satires. But these defects are probably due in the main to that tendency to sacrifice the whole to the parts which, as has been seen, had been encouraged by the practice of recitation.

Genial, if truculent, Lucilius had made satire the vehicle for his opinions on many subjects, while Horace, urbane and fearful of causing ennui, had recommended that the satirist should be versatile. But Juvenal, obsessed by the idea of the wickedness of his age, and finding his inspiration in a resentment at least partly personal, harped on a single note. With him invective, "imported into satire almost accidentally by Lucilius,"\* has absorbed the other elements which entered into its composition and become its predominating characteristic. "Economise your forces," urges Horace; "Hoist sail, spread every stitch of canvas," exclaims Juvenal. The latter assumes a higher and more tragic† tone than his predecessors, and this tone is echoed in his verse. With matter such as his the nonchalant movement of the Horatian hexameter would have accorded ill. Juvenal's line, like that of Lucan, is strong, resonant, and slightly monotonous.

Juvenal is no politician. Though every Roman emperor from Augustus to Domitian figures in his Satires it is only because, as the most highly placed, they supply the most conspicuous and effective examples of folly or of vice. But he holds no brief against the Imperial system. And if he is not a republican still less is he a democrat. What angers him is that "the fellow who cut my hair when I was a boy" should now be as rich as all the patricians put together (i. 24). Beyond the exclusion

\* J. D. Duff, to whose introduction to his edition of Juvenal I am greatly indebted

† S vi 635

of undesirable aliens he has no political programme. He is interested in the social question, but the social question comes to this that "the rich don't give enough"\*. As a moralist his judgments are sometimes vitiated by national prejudice. The appearance of a noble Roman in the arena is pronounced a scandal more portentous than the unspeakable depravities of which the mention has preceded. The learned lady is placed side by side with the adulteress and the poisoner. The climax of Nero's crimes, and that which makes him worse than another insane matricide is, that he, an Emperor, wrote a poem on the fall of Troy. Yet, with his conception of Roman dignity, and a somewhat vague ideal of ancient simplicity of life, Juvenal is genuinely horrified at the change which has come over the "Latian shepherds" (II 127). The picture of society which he draws is, to some extent, out of date, and truer of the reign of Domitian or even of that of Nero than of those in which he wrote, but he denounces vice with unexampled power. In his warning, ostensibly, it is true, but the complaint of an exhausted *román*, how in the midst of their enjoyment old age creeps upon the revellers unawares,† there is a truly Lucretian impressiveness, while his aphorism

*nunc tuas c'er  
a villam suddenly  
II 83*

combines moral insight with epigrammatic form

A philosopher Juvenal does not claim to be. He de-

\* Pichon, *Hist. Lit. Lat.*, p. 630

† *dum secta unguenta puellas  
poscimus, obrepit non intellecta senectus*

clares that he has never read the Stoics or the Cynics, the difference between whom he regards as immaterial. The results of philosophy may be attained by common sense, and if the former is great, so is experience.

Yet in this affected ignorance of philosophy there may be something of the old-fashioned Roman pose, and he may owe more to it than he admits, perhaps more than he knows. The prayer which he indicates as legitimate (x. 356-62) embodies an ideal largely coincident with Stoicism, and when he asserts the guilt of the unfulfilled intention (xiii. 210) and declares that sympathy is a gift which we have derived from heaven itself (xv. 146), he shows a consciousness of the new morality little consistent with his contention that the age in which he wrote was one of unexampled depravity (xiii. 300).

If Juvenal can attain to moral elevation, as a rule his temper is depressed. He is aware of the fatal handicap imposed by poverty on merit, and its "unkindest cut" in making the poor man look absurd. At best he can bring himself to pronounce those happy "who, taught by experience, have learned to endure the troubles of life and not to fret beneath the yoke" (xiii. 20). But he has no illusions about human nature, and has a knack of giving utterance to rather discouraging truths—such as

*True are the tears for loss of money shed*

xiii 134

This temper is matched by a sardonic tone. "Since we have ceased to sell our votes": that is how Juvenal indicates the Imperial regime, and the expression is typical of an habitual bitterness. Significant too is his use of mythological periphrasis and allusion.\* Both imply

\* *Eg* vii 25, x 171

ridicule of literary methods of which he is heartily weary, and to both—his dating of the flood as “ever since Deucalion climbed a mountain in a boat” (i 81) supplies an instance—he is apt to give a derisive turn. A rueful humour he sometimes shows, as where the humble citizen belaboured by a fashionable Apache begs “to be allowed to get home with a few teeth” (iii. 301). More amusing is the appeal of Amphion to Apollo in respect of his wife Niobe, who is taken as the type of a self-satisfied paragon: “The children are innocent. Shoot the *mother!*” (vi. 173). Humour, however, is rare in Juvenal, and his irony is heavy-handed. A patron who cannot afford to help a poor literary friend has yet enough to keep a tame lion “No doubt,” the satirist comments, “the beast costs less to keep; a poet’s guts hold more” (vii. 78). There is, indeed, a certain brutality about Juvenal which is in keeping with his attitude as that of a man of the people.

All the more startling are the very occasional touches of beauty: the wish, for instance, that to those men of old who desired that the teacher should be as a conscientious father to his pupils Heaven might accord “fragrance of crocuses, and in the un undying spring” (vii. 207).

These are but details. What, above all, makes Juvenal’s reputation is a unique pictorial power, a fine full-bodied rhetoric, and an unsurpassed faculty for coining phrases and aphorisms.

The first, which is his highest gift, is nowhere better exemplified than in the living presentation of the hurry, the bustle, the contrasts of wealth and poverty, and the disregard for human life, which he had seen in the streets, of Rome, a relentless city like London or Chicago.

The second may be illustrated from his eulogy of the

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great plebeians instanced in confirmation of his thesis that virtue is the only true nobility :

*The names the Decii bore, the lives they gave  
Were those of commoners, yet, when to save  
The legions all, and all the Allies as well,  
Aye the whole youth of Latium, they fell,  
Hell's gods and mother Earth were satisfied,  
Rating them higher than those for whom they died*  
viii 254

Or, take the lines on Hannibal in the Satire on the vanity of human wishes :

*The spirit which on a time convulsed the world  
Not swords shall end, nor stones nor javelins hurl'd,  
No, the Avenger which shall clear the score  
For Cannæ's stricken field and floods of gore  
A ring.*

The original of this is the most effective climax in Latin Literature, and the moral,

*Go, climb the Alps, ambition's fool,  
To please the boys and be a theme at school,\**  
x 165

is as telling from the point of view of rhetoric as it is misleading as an account of Hannibal's motives of action.

As for Juvenal's phrases and aphorisms, with many of them "the form is so perfect that posterity in despair of finding any better expression of the familiar idea has adopted the foreign phrase."† *Mens sana in corpore sano* (sound mind in body sound) has a solidity which defies time. In *res angusta domi* (narrow circumstances at home) it is the addition suggestive of the fact that poverty is mostly unavowed which makes it especially telling. The graphic concreteness of *panem et circenses* (bread and

\* The couplet is Dryden's, with the omission of a word.

† J. D. Duff, *op cit* p xl.

games) places it beyond competition as a summary of the ideals of a demoralised proletariat. Imperious caprice is crystallised in *hoc volo sic iubeo*, while the facile completeness of *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas* has given the line a familiarity proportionate to the universality of the error which it deprecates.

A corrective to the lurid picture of Roman life drawn by Juvenal is afforded by the correspondence of the Younger PLINY (*C. Plinius Cæcilius Secundus*, 62-113). Member of a society which Juvenal viewed from outside he introduces us to circles in which not a few men lived lives not merely respectable but elevated. The illustration he supplies to Juvenal's Satires shows that some practices\* denounced by the satirist, if not unknown, were not universal, and suggests that the latter was not guiltless of generalising from particular instances.

In style Pliny was an exponent of the Ciceronianism inculcated by his master Quintilian. But the artificiality of his Panegyric Oration betrays the influence of another of his teachers, the Asiatic Nicetes Sacerdos.

By birth a Cæcilius of Como, he lost his father early and came to Rome to be educated under the eye of his uncle, the elder Pliny. When the latter lost his life in the eruption of Vesuvius (79 A.D.) the nephew, adopted under his uncle's will, became *C. Plinius Cæcilius Secundus*. Next year saw the beginning of his career as an advocate and an official. He made his mark in the court of the centumviri. Martial, writing in later years, referred to his practice there, and knowing well what would please him declared that posterity would compare his speeches with those of Cicero †

\* Cf. Juv., *S. v.*, with Pliny, *Ep.* ii. 6.

† *X. xix. 17*.

Nor was his official advancement less rapid. If after his prætorship (93 A D) it received some check at the end of Domitian's reign, this was rectified on the accession of Nerva. Emboldened by the new regime, Pliny denounced in the Senate Publicius Certus, a prominent informer under Domitian, who had impeached the orator's friend Helvidius. But the most important part of his career fell in the reign of Trajan. He attracted the attention of the Emperor by the part he took with Tacitus in the trial of Marius Priscus, pro-consul of Africa, and was made consul by him in 100 A D. Pliny's panegyric oration was a speech of thanks on this occasion. After his consulship came a period of comparative repose, and it was mainly during this that the letters contained in the nine books of his correspondence were written. The notes of time show that they belong to the years 97-109. In 111 or 112 he was sent by Trajan to be governor of Bithynia. There he remained two years, and to these years the bulk of his correspondence with Trajan, published separately from the letters, belongs. His death, whether it took place in the province or after his return to Rome, occurred before 114 A D.

Of Pliny's speeches only the Panegyric Oration survives. It is an unpleasing production, too eulogistic in tone, too elaborate in style. If occasionally one finds in it expressions at once striking and pregnant, such as the characterisation of the tyrant emperors as "masters of their fellow citizens and slaves of their freedmen," these are far outnumbered by purely verbal conceits of which "I think you did not conquer in order to triumph, but triumphed because you had conquered" may serve as a specimen. Yet the Panegyric is important from the point of view of history and that of literature. It is a



valuable source of information for the opening years of Trajan's reign, and it served as a model for the Gallic panegyrists of the fourth century.

Pliny's letters do not bear comparison with Cicero's either for importance or for interest. They were written at a less eventful time, by a far smaller man, and—a circumstance which makes them inevitably less vivid and spontaneous—with a view to publication. Pliny himself was aware of the disadvantages under which he laboured. "I am very differently placed," he writes,\* "from M. Tullius whose example you invite me to follow. He had a very fertile mind which was matched by the variety and the importance of his topics. How narrow the limits are within which I am confined you see clearly without my telling you." The collection is described by the author as consisting of the more carefully written of his letters,† and that they were written, or at any rate edited, for publication is evident from their character. Cicero, writing to suit the occasion, will touch on a succession of topics: the political situation, his financial or literary affairs, the health of his family. With Pliny, each letter deals as a rule with a single subject, so as to ensure literary unity. Everywhere he shows careful attention to form. If he is telling stories he tells three, "according to the rules of the schools."‡ If he does digress he is careful to return to the point, while he often recurs to the opening words of his letter at the close §. Moreover, he is fond of concluding with a *mot*; for instance, "it is better to do nothing than to have nothing to do"|| or "nothing so unequal as equality."¶ Finally, no living person is referred to

\* *Ep* IX 11 2

† 11 20, VII 27

|| I 15 8

† *Ep* I 1

§ *Eg* III 16, IV 22

¶ IX 5

except in the language of compliment. There is but one exception, Regulus, a man who had been an informer under Domitian for whom Pliny thought it not unbecoming to show distaste.

None the less Pliny's letters possess the charm of a careful style, and the interest of a considerable variety of topics. As a public man and an advocate, a country gentleman, a litterateur, and a provincial governor, he had a full life. Accordingly we hear good deal of his activity in the courts, especially of the five criminal cases which he conducted before the Senatorial court, and his denunciation of Publicius Certus in the Senate. There is much about the management of his estates, though sport characteristically takes the form of sitting, notebook in hand, by the nets into which the game is to be driven. There are descriptions of the writer's country houses, the two villas on his native lake, and—in very minute detail—of his villa near Laurentum and that in Tuscany; also of beautiful places near the latter, Lake Vadimo in Etruria with its floating islands, and the limpid sources of the Clitumnus.

Literary topics abound. There are discussions on style, oratorical and historical, accounts of a rhetorician, Isaeus, a philosopher, Artemidorus, reference to recitations, Pliny's own or those of others. There are letters addressed to literary men (especially Pliny's friends Tacitus and Suetonius), appreciations of writers such as Silius and Martial, and a complete account of the productions and habits of work of the author's uncle, the elder Pliny.

The correspondence with Trajan is of quite a different character, for it consists of genuine letters, mostly in the form of requests to the Emperor for direction with brief replies from the latter. They exhibit a reluctance on the

part of the governor to assume responsibility, and a minute attention to detail on the part of his chief. The first is explained by Pliny's temperament : with a critical habit induced by his literary studies (how fussy he could be in relation to these is shown by the letter in which he deliberates how he shall conduct himself while his productions are being recited by another person) , \* he is slow to decide in practical matters. The second is partly explicable by the fact that the affairs of the province, which Trajan had just taken into his own hands, required especial care.

Two pairs of letters in each of the two divisions of the correspondence stand apart from the rest for their universal interest. The first † are the two referring to the great eruption of Vesuvius. Recording an unparalleled catastrophe which, occurring at the writer's most impressionable age, must have been among the most ineffaceable of his recollections, they are exceptionally vivid, and as intended for use in his friend's Histories for which he anticipated immortality, are written with careful art. No one who has read the first of these two letters can forget the apparition of the strange cloud, in shape and appearance resembling nothing so much as a stone pine, which was the first intimation of impending disaster, nor how the elder Pliny, "having started on his enterprise in the spirit of a *savant*, went through it in that of a hero ;" nor, indeed, how his nephew, unmoved as Goethe's Lotte, went on making extracts from Livy ; nor all the phases of the catastrophe, grotesque, like the sallying forth of the party with cushions on their heads as a protection against falling stones, or appalling, like the darkness, dense as that of a closed room in which the lights have been extinguished.

\* ix 34

† vi 16, 20

The authenticity of the two letters\* referring to the treatment of the Christians in Bithynia has been questioned, but probably without reason. The evidence which they give as to the numbers of the Christians in Bithynia and the nature of their practices, and as to the view of Christianity taken by the Roman Government, despite its opportunism and reluctance to prosecute, namely, that the religion as such was illegal, is of the first historical importance.

As Pliny supplies a corrective to Juvenal, so SÜETONIUS (75-140?) is at once antithetic and complementary to Tacitus. A younger contemporary of Pliny, he appears as the recipient or the subject of several of his epistles. Pliny, who was in a superior social position, affects rather the attitude of a patron towards Suetonius. He writes to reassure him about a dream which had made him anxious as to the issue of a lawsuit in which he was engaged, to urge him to publish a long-expected book, to promise to get a military tribunate which he has secured for him transferred to another man. Similarly, he makes interest with a friend in order that Suetonius might be able to buy a small property near Rome at a moderate price, and asks Trajan to grant him the privileges to which the fathers of three children were entitled, on the ground that his marriage had been an unfortunate one. The friend of Pliny under Trajan, Suetonius is associated with Septicius Clarus under Hadrian. Both were in the Emperor's service, Suetonius as imperial secretary (*magister epistularum*), Septicius Clarus as præfect of the Prætorian Guard. It was while Septicius held this office (119-121 A.D.) that Suetonius dedicated to him the lives of the Cæsars. Both were subsequently dismissed for some want

of respect to Hadrian's wife Sabina. Suetonius seems to have devoted the rest of his life to literature, and to have lived on into the reign of Antoninus Pius, that is to say, after 138 A.D.

Pliny described Suetonius as a student (*scholasticus*), and such he continued to be through life. An excerpter of books and a compiler of facts, he belongs to the same class as Varro and the elder Pliny. A number of titles of works by him, some of them certainly in Greek, have been preserved by Suidas; though it is likely that several of these titles are those of separate books of his *Miscellanies* (*Prata*), an encyclopædic work dealing with Roman antiquities and scientific subjects\*. But of all his productions we retain only a part of his *Lives of Eminent Men* (*de viris illustribus*) and the lives of the Cæsars from Julius Cæsar to Domitian (*de vita Cæsarum*). The former work included only men of letters, and these were arranged under six classes: poets, orators, philosophers, historians, rhetoricians, and grammarians. Nearly the whole of the last section survives together with three lives of poets, Terence, Horace, and Lucan, and fragments of the life of the elder Pliny. These lives contain some interesting quotations, such as Cæsar's famous criticism on Terence, and specimens of the familiar style in which Augustus bantered Horace, and give the impression of being better arranged than the lives of the Cæsars.

But it is to the latter work that Suetonius owes his reputation. The lives are far from faultless. They are not like Tacitus' *Agricola* or Plutarch's *Lives*, artistic biographies. On the contrary, they are constructed on a

\* Eight books treated Roman subjects: *ie* laws (bk. 4), customs (bk. 5), the calendar (bk. 8), the rest science: *ie* winds and seas (bk. 9), animals (bk. 10), botany (bk. 11), mineralogy (bk. 12).

stiff and generally uniform plan. Suetonius first gives an account of the Emperor's family, and traces his early life down to the time of his accession. Then, abandoning chronological sequence, he treats first his public then his private life under various headings, such as wars, public buildings, cruelty, mildness, giving facts or anecdotes in illustration. Finally he records the omens which preceded the Emperor's death and the manner of it. The small regard paid to chronology militates against tracing the development of character. Indeed, Suetonius' psychological skill is small, nor does he attempt to summarise the characters of his subjects. Attention is concentrated on the persons of the Emperors. No one reading the lives of Galba, Otho, or Vitellius would have a distinct idea of the events of the year which saw all three of them Emperors. There is no width of outlook about the lives, which hardly contain a single general reflection.

But Suetonius' biographies abound in facts. No work in ancient literature is so closely packed with them. What is more, these facts are carefully verified. As Hadrian's secretary, Suetonius had special facilities for access to documents, and he used them to the full. He remarks on the peculiarities of Augustus' handwriting, and infers that the poems attributed to Nero were really his from a consideration of the erasures in the MSS. His inquiry into the place of Caligula's birth has been instanced by one of his editors as a model of historical investigation. Moreover his details have their interest and their significance. Sometimes they reveal character not less effectively than analysis. In any case it is something to know the jests the Emperors made—Caligula's description of Livia as "Ulysses in petticoats," or Vespasian's dying gibe, "Alack, I fancy I am turning into a god";

something to know what Augustus had for luncheon, or what was the colour of Cæsar's eyes. Indeed, the detailed descriptions of the personal appearance of each of the Emperors are invaluable in connection with the study of the splendid series of Cæsarian busts.

Thus Suetonius represents the antithesis to Tacitus. His lives are full of miscellaneous statements of the kind which Tacitus pronounced "unworthy of the dignity of history, and only fitted to appear in the daily gazette." Difference of intention is matched by difference of literary methods. Where Tacitus employs a dignified periphrasis Suetonius has a plain word. Suetonius quotes documents verbatim, a practice which Tacitus avoids for fear of impairing the homogeneity of his style. It is unlikely that Suetonius set much store by his. Undistinguished, if lucid, it is governed by a desire for brevity which shows itself in a lavish use of participles, calculated to facilitate the inclusion of a number of statements in a single closely-packed sentence. Only very rarely, as in his account of the death of Nero (cc. 47-49), does he allow himself enough scope to make a strong impression. But here his minute detail, his recital of the very surmises overheard from the passers-by, his indication of each step in the miserable proceedings, his record of the distraught but supremely characteristic ejaculations of the terror-stricken Emperor, combine to produce an effect uniquely graphic.

Contemporary with Suetonius, or nearly so, were two historical writers of a very different type. One of these was Justinus, whose abridgment of the Philippic histories of Pompeius Trogus has been already noticed (p. 361), the other was FLORUS (*L. Annus Florus*), who has left an epitome of Roman history down to Augustus.

Conceiving the Roman people as an individual, he sketches its infancy under the kings (I. i–ii), its youth during the conquest of Italy (I. iii–xvii), and its manhood during the subjugation of the world (I. xviii. to end of Book II.). The fourth stage, its old age from the end of Augustus to the time of writing, he indicates in his preface (I. i 8), but does not treat. The two books are intended to exhibit respectively the greatness and the decline of Roman morality. The latter process is declared, in an anticipated summary of the whole period of maturity (I. xlvii), to have begun with the events of 146 B.C. and the resultant influx of wealth, to which Rome's subsequent troubles are referred. But since the decline is less apparent in external than in internal affairs, the first book includes the wars down to the end of the Republic. In the second book Florus tells of the domestic disturbances from the Gracchic onwards, the civil war, and the victorious campaigns under Augustus. There is less thought in the work than the above account might seem to imply. As is indicated by the title\* as given in one manuscript, it is little more than a summary of wars, the names of which supply the headings of the several chapters. The author is pre-eminently a rhetorician, and his summary abounds in epigrams, exclamations, and moralisings. The last feature of the work, with its brevity, made it popular in the middle ages, and the first occasionally served the epitomator's need to hit off a situation with a phrase. But, if not the least lively of the abridgments of Roman history, the book has no independent worth, and is too panegyrical to be accurate.

\* *Bellorum Romanorum libri duo.*



## XVII

### AFRICAN LATINITY AND THE END OF THE NATIONAL LITERATURE

SUETONIUS may be considered as the last of the classical writers. His prominence is due less to his gifts than to his isolation. The revival which occurred under Trajan died away under Hadrian, and during the reigns of the Antonines, so notable for tranquillity and good government, Latin literature suffered an eclipse. Indeed, throughout the second century the most distinguished writers and thinkers were Greek or wrote in Greek. History is represented by Plutarch, Appian, Arrian, and Dion Cassius, rhetoric by Dion Chrysostom, ethics by Maximus of Tyre, philosophy by Epictetus. It seemed as if Greek had reasserted its supremacy as a vehicle for thought. When Marcus Aurelius wished to commune with himself he wrote his meditations in Greek. Latin literature on the other hand remained untouched by the intellectual and religious interests of the time. It suffered, in fact, from the absorption of some talent in juristic studies, an absorption incident to the initiation of a code in the *perpetual edict* of Hadrian. For the institutes of Gaius (about 160 A.D.), lucid as they are, do not belong to literature. The diffusion of a religious spirit among the masses, taking the form of a devotion to oriental cults, is to some extent reflected in Apuleius.

But for the rest we find "an empty rhetoric or a sterile erudition" \*.

At the same time this barren period inaugurated a distinct stylistic phase, though this was not so much a genuine growth as a reaction, and was associated with the decadence rather than the development of the language. Juvenal (vii 147), declared that Africa, "nurse of pleaders," offered a more promising field for forensic eloquence than Rome. There, too, Latin persisted in a form less modernised and more akin to that of the Republic than in the capital. Thus it was that when there was something in the nature of an antiquarian revival at Rome its chief representatives were found among a series of writers who hailed from Africa.

M. CORNELIUS FRONTO (about 100-175 A.D.), born at Cirta in Numidia, came to Rome in the reign of Hadrian, and obtained a great reputation as advocate, rhetorician, and critic. He is described by one of the Gallic panegyrists as "not the second but the other glory of Roman eloquence." In view of his distinction Antoninus Pius made him tutor to his adopted sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and in 143 A.D. raised him to the consulship. Of Fronto's scanty remains the most interesting part is his correspondence with Marcus Aurelius †. Yet even this is disappointing. It is intimate enough and on both sides shows an effusive and sentimental affection the sincerity of which there is no reason to doubt. But it deals mostly with personal affairs, often Fronto's health,

\* Pichon, *Hist. Lit. Lat.*, p. 712, on whose summary this paragraph is based.

† There are five books of correspondence with M. Aurelius before his accession, and two, more or less mutilated, out of an original five written to or by him as Emperor.

or else with details about the rhetorical studies pursued by Marcus under his master's guidance, and throughout, though there is abundance of words, there is extraordinarily little thought. It is not surprising that in the latest letters addressed to the prince as a pupil we see the latter, once so docile, growing restive at the emptiness of rhetorical themes (v. 23, 28), and feeling the call of philosophy (iv. 13). As Emperor he resumed the study of eloquence with a view strictly to the performance of his duties. How strenuous he was in the discharge of these one may see from a group of letters entitled "about the holidays of Alsium" (*de feriis Alsicensibus*), in which Fronto prettily urges him to take a holiday. "They say," he writes, "that when the halcyon days are come the very sea keeps holiday. And does the halcyon deserve a rest more than you and your children do?" This appeal he reinforces by the apologue, charming, if somewhat affected in its *naïveté*, on the birth of sleep.\* The Emperor replies with a reference to the imperious call of duty.

Fronto on his part had no thought for anything but the study of eloquence. Neglect of this, he declares, is the one thing which could impair the friendship between him and the Emperor, and in a letter on eloquence (*de eloquentia*) he upholds its value as against philosophy. But he had not enough sound sense to inform his eloquence. His treatise on the Parthian war (162 A.D.) consists of a pedantic collection of instances from history to console the Emperor for reverses to the Roman arms, and an unpractical suggestion that he should combine soldiering with the solution of syllogisms. His panegyric on Verus' administration in the East (*principia historiae*) is a ridiculous piece of flattery, while the futility of his

\* Translated by Pater in *Marius the Epicurean*.

rhetorical eulogies of dust and negligence (*laudes fumi, laudes negligentiae*) is only equalled by the seriousness with which he expounds the principles to be observed in compositions of this kind. Only in his reply to the Emperor's condolence on the death of his grandson is there a poignant expression of feeling, though even here he cannot keep clear of trifling conceits.

Fronto was the exponent and the advocate of what he called "the modern manner" (*elocutio novella*).\* This was the outcome of a reaction against the strain imposed on the language by the Spanish writers from Seneca to Tacitus, and against their tendency to enlarge the sphere of metaphor and look for their diction to Augustan poetry. It took the form of simplicity in structure and archaism in language. Seneca with his linguistic *tours de force* was the enemy, but the revolt against him carried Fronto further back than Cicero, to whom his attitude is respectful but unenthusiastic. The writers whom he acclaims are the pre-Ciceronians, Ennius, Plautus, Lucretius, Gracchus, Cato, and Cato's imitator Sallust. He searches their pages for specimens of obsolete diction, declares that he prefers the letters of Cicero to his speeches because the latter contain no "unexpected or surprising words," and congratulates M. Aurelius with being able to overlay his productions with "the genuine hue of antiquity." Simultaneously modern colloquial language is called in to reinforce the protest against the literary language of Imperial times†. Holding such views as these, the

\* Fronto criticises in a speech of M. Aurelius *Nonnulli interdum elocutione novella parum signatum*, p. 153

† *Ego immo (utor) vulgaribus et obsoletis*, p. 152 *Revertere potius ad verba apta et propria et suo suco imbuta*, p. 161 *Quid igitur? Non malum mihi minimum Antonini aut Commodi aut Pii? Omni ergo opera si fieri potest linguam communem reddas*, p. 161

rhetorician of Cirta may be regarded as the first of the "African" writers.

African by nationality AULUS GELLIUS (b. about 130) was not, but he was a pupil and an admirer of Fronto and, like his master, an archaiser—a denouncer of Seneca, a defender of Sallust—and a lover of ancient words. He was, however, not a rhetorician but a savant. After learning eloquence from Fronto at Rome he studied philosophy under Herodes Atticus at Athens. During the course of a winter in Attica he began to make a collection of miscellaneous learning. This collection he continued at Rome in the intervals of business and judicial duties, and eventually published his notes in a work containing twenty books and entitled with reference to its inception, *Attic Nights*. There is no principle of arrangement. Excerpts were placed in the order in which they were made. But his "literary storehouse" contains some fine confused feeding. The extracts are concerned with philosophy, moral and natural, history and biography, literary criticism, and antiquities, religious, social, and political, and, above all, lexicographical matter. More than a quarter of the whole work consists of explanations of old words and points of grammar. The latter have their importance; but more interesting from a literary point of view is a critical comparison of passages from the comedy of the *Lock* (*Phocum*) by Cæcilius with their originals by Menander, together with citations from old writers such as Cato and Claudius Quadrigarius. Gellius does not generalise, he merely collects. But he endeavours to make his matter attractive by giving it a dramatic setting. In most cases this is perhaps fictitious. But the following reminiscence of his university days at Athens may be as true as it is certainly pleasing. "A

good many of us, Greeks and Romans both, who were studying the same subjects, were crossing from Ægina to the Piræus in the same vessel. It was night, and the season summer. The sea was calm and the sky clear and cloudless. So we all sat together on the poop and looked at the shining stars." And thus, characteristically, Gellius slips into a discussion of the derivation of the word *Septentriones*, the Latin equivalent for Charles' wain. No stylist, Gellius writes more simply than Fronto, but the absence of harmonious structure and his fondness for old words connect him with his school and period.

Far more gifted than either Fronto or Gellius and a more extreme exponent of the tendencies discernible in their works was APULEIUS. He was born at Madaura in Africa (about 125 A.D.), and he describes himself as half Numidian and half Gætulan. But he had a varied training, for he studied at Carthage and Athens, travelled in Greece and Asia Minor, being in the course of these travels initiated into a number of mysteries, and practised for a time as an advocate in Rome. After returning to Africa he fell ill on a journey to Alexandria at a place called Oea, where he met and married Æmilia Pudentilla. Her family disapproved the match and accused Apuleius of magic, a charge against which he successfully defended himself in his *Apology* (*Apologia* or *de magia liber*). During the rest of his life he seems to have resided at Carthage, not unhonoured—for statues were erected to him and he was a priest of the imperial cult—and to have occupied himself with writing and lecturing.

Apuleius was a Platonist and a rhetorician. His productions in the former capacity are represented by an exposition of Plato's physical and ethical teaching\* (*de*

\* Two books the third is not by Apuleius.

*Platone et eius dogmate*), an address on the *Demon of Socrates* (*de deo Socratis*), and a reproduction of the tract on the universe (*de mundo*) wrongly attributed to Aristotle. Of his rhetorical works we have his *Flowers of Eloquence* (*Florida*), an anthology of twenty-four selections from his public addresses and lectures, and the *Apology* already mentioned.

The philosophical treatises are fairly accurate *résumés* of Plato's doctrine, laying, however, special stress on its religious and mystical side. Thus in the *Demon of Socrates* he emphatically asserts the need of man for beings which may be intermediaries between themselves and the Gods. The *Apology* is a humorous and discursive defence against the accusation of magic brought against him. He lays himself out to entertain his audience; but while rebutting the specific charges, the confirmed *poseur* evidently desires to maintain the atmosphere of mystery which surrounds him.

But the work which has made Apuleius famous is his *Transformations* (*metamorphoses*). This is a novel of the same discursive kind as the fragmentary satiricon of Petronius (p. 426), and is announced by the author as a series of episodes in the Milesian style. A shorter version of the story told in it (which is about the adventures of a man who was turned into an ass) appears in *Lucius or the Ass*, wrongly attributed to Lucian. Both versions were probably based on an earlier treatment of the same topic by Lucius of Patras, but there are indications that Apuleius' version was supplemented from other sources. The alternative name of "the Golden Ass" is only a complimentary title; but it is not undeserved. In the main a recital of marvellous adventures diversified by stories told with little scruple about interrupting its continuity,

it presents a strange medley of the ludicrous, the horrible, the hideous, the beautiful, the voluptuous, and the exalted. Lucius the Greek, travelling in Thessaly, the home of magic, reaches Hypata, a city where all things seem bewitched. Strange are the tales he hears, and strange his own experiences. On the point of being condemned for the murder of three gigantic robbers, whom he has slain overnight while returning from a banquet, he is confronted with the corpses, when they are seen to be three wineskins shrewdly gashed. Aided by Fotis, a maid of easy virtue, he endeavours to imitate the magic of his hostess whom he had seen transform herself into an owl, but by some mischance turns himself not, as he had hoped, into an eagle, nor indeed any bird, but an ass. Many are the vicissitudes through which he has to pass before he can secure that supper of rose leaves which alone can restore him to his former shape. He is forced by robbers, who have sacked his host's house, to bear the plunder to their cave, and is thus enabled to narrate their exploits. Hither is brought a captured maiden Charitè, and it is to console her that an old hag tells the lovely tale of Cupid and Psyche, which occupies two out of the eleven books of the *Metamorphoses*. After a vain attempt to escape on the back of the ass, Charitè is rescued by her lover, masquerading as a new recruit to the robber band. The ass now bears her home in triumph, and is destined by her to a life of ease. But the tragic fates of lover and maiden set him on his wanderings again. Her servants decamp with her effects and the ass must take his share in carrying them. Amid perils from wolves, dragons, and irate husbandmen, the cavalcade at length reaches a hiding-place. There the ass is disposed of to a vagabond troop of priests of Cybele, of whose rascalities he is



a witness till their thefts get them into trouble and he becomes the property of a miller. To pass over the untoward end of the miller and the woes of his next owner, a gardener, the ass is eventually bought from the gardener's oppressor by two slaves, a cook and a confectioner. And here Fortune smiles on him, for the aptitude he displays for the consumption of human food is deemed an accomplishment, and makes him the favourite of their master. Unfortunately the latter destines him to appear on the stage in an abhorrent part. He escapes, to meet the divine deliverance which is described in the concluding book.

It is an adventurous life which the ass has led and a hard one. Always in the way of blows, he narrowly escapes being thrown over a precipice, cut open that a runaway captive may be stitched inside his skin, gelded as a cure for temper, and served up as a substitute for venison which has been eaten by a dog. And, indeed, for others besides asses the world in which he moves is a lurid, cruel, and oppressive one. Only, as has been remarked by the latest translator of the *Metamorphoses*,\* "the general atmosphere is so fantastic and unreal that the picture thrills without revolting." Nor is it meant to be taken seriously; throughout there is veiled satire on superstition and burlesque of tragedy. The last is surely blended in the low-life reproduction of Seneca's *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*†. The horrors are relieved by humour and by beauty. The former is largely of a Swift-like type, presenting such a view of humanity as an ass might command. "Nowhere," says Lucius, "was there any consolation for my life of torture, except that I could solace myself

\* Trans by E. Butler, p. viii, note

† Cf. *Met* x 3, with Seneca, *Phædra* 646

with my natural curiosity. Everybody did and said whatever they pleased, since they took no notice of my presence." The element of beauty is pre-eminently conspicuous in the episode of Cupid and Psyche. In its origin a fairy story, widely diffused in the mythology of the Aryan nations, it reflects the simplicity and, in some respects, the heartlessness of the *märchen*. But for Apuleius its source was doubtless Milesian, and he tells the tale with caressing tenderness and delicate grace, with just a touch of burlesque in his presentation of the Gods, and perhaps the vaguest allegorical intention.

The last book was written by the mystic which in Apuleius was doubled with the rhetorician. The conclusion is quite different from that of *Lucius* or *The Ass*, and is doubtless the writer's own. The much-tried ass is lying on the shore at Cenchreæ when, in answer to his earnest prayer, the apparition of Isis rises from the sea and tells him how to end his troubles. He is to join her procession on the morrow and to eat the garland of roses which is being borne by her priest. In return he is to become her votary. The sequel, the restoration of Lucius to his former self and his subsequent initiations (rather more numerous than he had expected), are told with the tranquil exaltation of a neophyte who has found peace.

The peculiar style of the *Metamorphoses* may be in part explicable on the view that it was an early work, a view which receives countenance from the request for indulgence made by the author at the outset on the ground that he has but lately learned Latin. In a greater degree it is connected with the extravagance of the matter. For the style of the *Apology* is simple and clear, often recalling Cicero, while that of the treatise on

Plato's philosophy is matter-of-fact. On the other hand it resembles generally that of the epideictic pieces in the *Florida*, while half-way between these two groups is the lecture on the Dæmon of Socrates.\* It is a style diffuse and florid, aiming not so much at conveying the meaning to the intellect as at producing an effect upon the senses. To this end "all the methods which can produce the softest euphony are lavishly employed." There are cunning alliterations, plays upon words of similar sound, and a multiplication of measured clauses exactly corresponding in the number of their syllables and often rhyming at the close. The diction is bizarre and lawless, a jumble of archaisms and neologisms, of the conversational and the poetic. Decadent it is no doubt, and a strange travesty of the dignified Latin tongue, yet it suits the fantastic subject-matter well enough, and possesses a fascination all its own.

Besides these archaising innovators in prose there were, and had been since the time of Hadrian, "neoteric" poets (*poetæ neoterici* or *novelli*). These mainly affected anapæstic and dimeter metres; but their trifling productions belong mostly to the by-paths of literature.

Yet the address of Hadrian (for he too must be reckoned among them) claims mention for its personal and human interest; and its beauty provokes an attempt at translation, although the effect of the diminutives, which lend to the expression of the Emperor's misgivings so playful, caressing, and pathetic a grace, can hardly be reproduced in English:

*Soul of me, vague, debonnaire,  
Guest of this body, and friend,*

---

\* Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, pp. 600 ff.

*Say whither now thou wilt fare,  
Pallid and rigid, and bare,  
Little soul,  
All thy jests at an end ?<sup>1</sup>*

A far more arresting production of the same school is the vigil or nocturne of Venus (*Pervigilium Veneris*), a poem in trochaic tetrameters by an unknown writer, probably composed in connection with the spring festival of Venus, the goddess of birth, which had been revived by Hadrian. It is, perhaps, referable to the time of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, though some critics put it as late as the third or fourth century. In character it is a choric nuptial ode seemingly with strophic arrangement, content and form being somewhat as follows :

(*Pro ode*, 1-8) It is springtime and the eve of Dione's festival, (*Strophe* 1. 9-11, 63-68) † for to-morrow is the birthday of the world, the primal marriage of the spring spirit with the earth, when Dione, too, was born, sprung from the sea-foam, Dione whose influence makes the universe fecund. (*Strophe* II 13-37.) She it is who paints the flowers in spring and makes the rose-buds, wet with the dews which the breeze of night has shed, to

<sup>1</sup> *Annula, vagula, blandula,  
hospes comesque corporis,  
que nunc abibis in loca,  
pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
nec, ut soles, dabis ucos ?*

† I have adopted the transpositions of lines 59 62 and 63-68 suggested by Mueller and Buecheler respectively, following throughout C. Clementi, whose arrangement of the *Pervigilium* as a strophic choric poem seems better (besides involving less alteration of the text) than that of Prof. Mackail, who would divide it into twenty-two four line stanzas each followed by the refrain

blossom with the dawn, as she brings rose-maidens to the full bloom of youth and love. For to-morrow is Love's holiday, and he is none the less mighty that he is unrobed and unarmed (*Mesode*, 38-46) Lo! Venus has sent her maidens to Diana to ask her to yield her the sovereignty of the woodland, that it may be undisturbed by the slaughter of the chase. (*Antistrophe* II. 47-51) Three nights the revels shall endure, and Ceres, Bacchus, and Apollo lend their aid. She herself the while holds high session, and well she may, for she it was who, by the power of love, moulded the destinies of the Roman people. (*Antistrophe* I. 78-90) She it is who gives fertility to field and flock and herd, and the birds that sing along the marsh or beneath the poplar shade. (*Epode*, 91-95) I alone am silent.

The poem possesses a singular and compelling charm. Written in a metre at all times popular in Latin, but unrepresented in literature since Plautus, it owes much of its effectiveness to its haunting refrain :

*Loveless, mayst thou love to-morrow, loving, still to-morrow love :*

—a refrain which has been imagined by the author of *Marius the Epicurean* as a burden actually chanted by the populace at the festival of Venus, which, in the mind at once reminiscent and creative of some latter-day poet, became the germ of an artfully constructed whole.

Certainly the poem presents a fascinating combination of things old and new. *Naïve* with the deliberate *naïveté* of the Antonine writers, it is also subtle. The primitive metre has taken on a new movement, the sound of the verse anticipates the sonority of rhyming mediæval Latin, and the meaning, despite recurrence to old tales of myth-

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet*

ology and Roman pride of race, has some hint of the mysticism of mediæval thought; while the deep feeling for nature to which Lucretius and Virgil had given expression is embroidered with the delicate phantasy of a poetry yet unborn. Rapturous with the joy of spring, playful with a refined reproduction of Pescennine badinage, the poem closes on a note of melancholy. All the birds (says the poet) are singing, Tereus' daughter among them, singing surely not of a husband's cruelty, but of the ecstasy of love.

*Yes, she sings, but I am silent    When for me doth springtime  
come?*

*When shall I be as the swallow, and remain no longer dumb?*

Is this an allusion to some dream of personal happiness unfulfilled, or rather the expression of a poet's regret at the silence which had fallen on the Latin Muse, and of the consciousness of anticipations only to be realised by other minds in days long after?

The "new" writers did not put new life into Latin Literature. Rather did they contribute towards breaking up the structure and impairing the purity of the language. For a century after the death of Marcus Aurelius, Pagan Literature at least was practically extinct. Jurists, it is true, there were, Papinian under Septimius Severus, Ulpian under Caracalla. But the statement just made need only be qualified by the mention of NEMESIANUS who, under the patronage of Numerian (about 280 A.D.) produced a didactic poem in hexameters about hunting (*Cynegetica*), and four pastoral eclogues which owed much to, but certainly did not surpass, those of Calpurnius (p. 388).

The reason for this barrenness is to be found partly in the disorganisation of the Roman Empire. Endangered

by barbarian assaults, it was distracted by internal dissensions. Between Commodus and Diocletian no fewer than twenty-five emperors sat upon the throne. But apart from this, in order that there should be orators and poets, new ideas and new emotions were required, and it was only in Christianity that these were to be found. Towards the end of the second century, men of education, hitherto indifferent to Christianity, began to examine it with more attention, and some of them became its advocates. The third century was the age of the Christian Apologists. They are associated for the most part with Africa. For three of the five, TERTULLIAN (c. 155-222 A.D.), CYPRIAN (c. 200-258 A.D.), and ARNOBIUS (fl. c. 290 A.D.), Africa was their birthplace and the sphere of their work. Of the other two MINUCIUS FELIX (fl. c. 230 A.D.) was a Roman, while LACTANTIUS (c. 260-340 A.D.) was a professor of rhetoric at Nicomedia. These men imported into their writings the vigour of a new faith upon its trial. Yet they remained subject to pre-existing literary influences. Thus the Africans wrote in Latin reminiscent of Apuleius, while the other two followed the Ciceronian tradition revived by Quintilian.

The barren period of Pagan Literature had coincided with the age of anarchy. But under a succession of vigorous rulers from Diocletian to Theodosius there was a revival. Security was restored, and a feeling of pride in the empire again became possible. Simultaneously Christianity, which Constantine had made the official religion, exercised a stimulating influence on Pagan Literature. The desire whether to oppose or to dispense with and replace it roused an intellectual activity in strong contrast with the apathy of the third century. During the fourth century took place a renaissance which, initiated under Diocletian, matured under Theodosius.

Eloquence and history, closely connected as they were with politics, were the first to feel these influences. About the end of the third century two literary monuments mark the beginning of the new movement.

The *Panegyrics* are a collection of speeches delivered on various occasions of ceremony, such as the visits of rulers to the cities of Gaul. They are the outcome of the Gallic schools of rhetoric, and the pagan rhetoricians who delivered them are connected with Gaul as the Christian apologists had been with Africa. The speeches themselves are composed on the model of Pliny's panegyric on Trajan and, like this, are ornate and empty, but reflect a genuine gratitude for the benefits conferred on Gaul by more efficient rule.

The *Augustan Histories* are a record by six different hands of the emperors from Hadrian to Numerian (217-284 A.D.). As the panegyrics were modelled on Pliny's eulogy of Trajan, so these were composed on the lines of the *Lives of the Cæsars* by Suetonius. But the biographical method introduced by Suetonius descended to greater triviality of detail with the development of court life initiated by Diocletian. The style of the *Augustan Histories* is dull, and their diction degenerate.

A contrast to the detailed treatment of the last mentioned work is presented by the compendium of the main facts of Roman history from the foundation of the city to the death of Jovian, dedicated (369, A.D.) by EUTROPIUS to the Emperor Valens. There is more interest in the *Cæsars* \*

\* The origin of the Roman nation (*origo gentis Romanæ*) and the lives of illustrious men (*de viris illustribus*), dealing respectively with the regal and the republican history of Rome, which have been combined with the *Cæsars*, are by an unknown writer, and so is an epitome of the *Cæsars* continuing the series down to Theodosius



of AURELIUS VICTOR (written 360 A.D.) His short biographies of the emperors from Augustus to Constantius, while they do not go into detail like the Augustan histories, bring out with some clearness the characters of the emperors and their relation to contemporary events.

But far more important than either biographies or epitomes is the really valuable record of AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS (322-400 ?) A Greek of Antioch who saw a good deal of service under Constantius and Julian, he wrote his history at Rome about 390 A.D. Of the thirty-one books which it contained, providing a continuation of Tacitus' Histories from Nerva to Valens (96-378 A.D.), only the last eighteen remain. But in these we probably possess the most valuable part of the work. Covering as they do a period of only twenty-five years (353-378), they are as detailed as the lost books, or most of them, must have been compendious, and they deal with a period for which Ammianus was a contemporary authority. Ammianus has the great merit of impartiality. The claim he makes at the close of his book, "history professes truth, and never as I think have I outraged her either by silence or falsehood," is acknowledged by Gibbon to have been justified. Although a pagan he bears witness to the devotion of Christian martyrs, and his estimates of the leading men of his time, Constantius, Valentinian, Valens, and even his hero Julian, are on the whole those now approved. This merit is marred by his style. It is at once obscure, owing to the extraordinary arrangement of the words, and bombastic, as designed for recitation. Phrases such as "the trumpets of eternal disaster were sounding" justify the observation that "his style is more modern than classical, so modern as to be at times nearly

journalistic."\* Its eccentricities are explicable in part by the nationality and the profession of the writer. The very considerable knowledge of Latin writers which he had somehow managed to acquire is oddly applied. Yet he describes personal experiences, such as his escape from Amid in Mesopotamia, graphically enough, and he writes of war as one who has known its realities. Perhaps as an old soldier ending his days among civilians he is unduly trenchant in his satire on the luxurious aristocracy and the pampered proletariat of Rome; but his account of the social and administrative weaknesses of the Roman empire serves to explain its approaching collapse. Among those whom he exempts from his strictures is SYMMACHUS (340-402 A.D.). Of ancient family, and a distinguished orator, successively prefect of the city (384-5 A.D.) and consul (391 A.D.), Symmachus was a prominent representative of pagan society at the close of the fourth century. He wrote letters in the style of Pliny, and his son edited a collection in nine books, followed by a book of official reports to emperors, in both cases after the precedent set by Pliny. These letters, elegantly written, are curiously empty. They contain hardly a hint of the great questions of the day. There is nothing in them about the menace of the barbarians, except in the book of reports about Christianity. There are indications that Symmachus relegated facts to postscripts, fearful of marring the elegance of his style, and that the postscripts were suppressed by his son. The letters are formal, short, and full of excuses for not being longer. The opulent stylist protests that he is "poor in speech and economical of paper" (iv. 27). Nor is the following an unfair specimen of the kind of matter with which he ekes out a letter.

"So I hope you are well, I inform you that I am, and I hope in return that you will reward me with news of your own health." \*

Even the reports are largely concerned with trivial subjects. But there is one (*relatio* 3, 384 A.D.) which is of considerable interest. It is the famous petition for the restoration in the Senate-house of the altar of Victory, which was regarded in a special sense as a symbol of Paganism. Symmachus adopts a liberal attitude towards Christianity, he even hints at some kind of an accommodation between it and Paganism. "There are more ways than one," he writes, "of reading the great mystery." In the sequel he makes Rome, depicted as a venerable mother, plead to be allowed to continue in the exercise of her ancient rites.

This devotion to the past of Rome extended to her monuments. The fourth century was distinguished by its attention to Latin philology. Diomedes, Charisius, and Donatus occupied themselves with questions of language, and the last mentioned and Servius produced learned commentaries on Terence and Virgil respectively. But the writer with whom philological studies assumed their liveliest form was MACROBIUS † He threw a mass of erudite information freely borrowed from Gellius and others into a dialogue called *Saturnalia*, purporting to be a three days' conversation in which Prætextatus, an authority on augural lore, Symmachus, the young Servius, and other contemporary representatives of paganism take part. A variety of subjects is discussed, but what is said about literature centres round Virgil, with whom

\* v 61, quoted by Glover, *op cit* p 158

† End of fourth and beginning of fifth century The dramatic date of the *Saturnalia* was probably 380 A.D.

four out of the seven books are concerned. Virgil is treated with the profoundest reverence; Evangelus, the one speaker who ventures to call him in question, being regarded with a shocked surprise. But it is the learning of Virgil, his omniscience in details, which is everywhere vindicated. Of the main idea and purpose of the *Æneid* Macrobius has no conception. Macrobius' other extant work is a commentary on Scipio's dream in Cicero's *Republic* (p. 194). In it he reinforces Cicero's doctrine of the immortality of the soul by a popular exposition of the Neoplatonic philosophy. In both these works the indirect influence of Christianity is traceable. In the *Saturnalia* the Gods are accepted but represented as incarnations of a single deity, while the myths are explained as symbols of natural phenomena. Thus Macrobius gets rid at once of the multiplicity of the Gods and the morality of the legends, both strongly attacked by the Christians, while in the "dream" he would seem to be concerned to show the sufficiency of Neoplatonism as against Christianity.

The revival of pagan literature in the fourth century included poetry as well as prose. Of the geographical poet AVIENUS\* little need be said, for his *Phænomena* and *Description of the World* in hexameters are but translations respectively of Aratus and Dionysius Periegetes, and of his *Mediterranean Seaboard* (*ora maritima*) in iambs, interesting and well executed as it is, only a fragment of the first book remains. But there are two poets more important in themselves and more representative of the influences of their time. It has been seen from the Panegyrics that "two facts dominate the history of pagan society in the fourth century: the

\* Pro-consul of Achaia in 372 A D

restoration of the imperial power and the development of the Gallic schools of rhetoric."\* Claudian is the only one of the first; Ausonius of the second. DECIUS MAGNUS AUSONIUS (310-395), born at Bordeaux, first practised as an advocate, and then in the year 334 A.D. became a professor of rhetoric in the university of Bordeaux. Thirty years later the Emperor Valentinian asked him to be tutor to his son Gratian. This connection secured Ausonius, when his pupil succeeded to the throne, a succession of important prefectureships, and, finally, the consulship (379 A.D.). Despite this promotion he remained through life a *littérateur*, and finally retired and lived at his ease at Bordeaux. Ausonius tells us more of himself than any other poet. A large number of his poems are personal. He introduces himself and sketches his career in an elegiac poem, and in another addresses his property at Bordeaux, being careful to specify the acreage under vines, grass, and timber. In the *Daily Round* (*Ephemera*) he describes in different metres the successive occupations of his day. He writes, mainly in elegiacs but also in lyric metres, obituary notices of twenty professors who were his colleagues in the university of Bordeaux, and in his *Tributes to Departed Kinsmen* (*parentalia*) similarly commemorates thirty of his deceased relations. In these poems Ausonius appears as a thorough *bourgeois*, complacent but good-hearted, if a trifle egotistic. At some time in his career he professed Christianity, which was now the religion of functionaries, and the *Daily Round* includes a long prayer addressed in perfectly orthodox terms to the three persons of the Trinity; but the personal aspirations which it embodies are in ethos purely

\* Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 809

Horatian. In the words with which he passes to the next episode, "the morning walk" (*egressio*), "enough of prayers to heaven we've given" (*satis precum datum est deo*), the sigh of relief is almost audible. But if wanting in elevation Ausonius has warm affections. The lines in which he laments the death of his father (*epicedion*) are touching in their piety, and an epigram on his wife, of whose death at the age of twenty-seven he speaks thirty-six years later as a wound which will not bear to be touched, has a peculiar tenderness.

*Be life what it has been, and let us hold,  
Dear wife, the names we each gave each of old;  
And let not time work change upon us two,  
I still your boy, and still my sweetheart you.*<sup>1</sup>

A large proportion of his verses may be classed as pedagogic. The *Admonition* (*carmen protrepticum*) to his grandson, telling him how he should behave at school, is readable enough; but many, like the quatrains on the Cæsars from Julius to Hchogabalus, or the short hexameter pieces on the notable cities of the Empire (*ordo urbium nobilium*), are designed to convey information in brief, and some, like the lines on the days of the week and the number of days in the month, do not rise above the dignity of a *memoria technica*. If such pieces are connected with Ausonius' profession as a teacher, others might be entitled "recreations of a professor." Such are the ninety hexameters on the number three,† the so-called "play" of the seven wise men, in which the sages introduced by an actor (*Ludius*) enter successively and describe their contributions to wisdom, metrical eccentricities

<sup>1</sup> Epigram 40, first four lines, trans. by Glover, *op. cit.*

† *Eg. ter bibe, tris numerus super omnia, tris deus unus*

(*technopagnon*), a book of nine pieces in hexameters (enumerating the names of the Gods, parts of the body, viands etc.), ending in a monosyllable, preceded by one in which the final monosyllable of each line is repeated at the beginning of the next, or the prayer in hexameters composed of words lengthening in an arithmetical progression of syllables \*

Ausonius did not overrate the value of these productions himself. Of more definitely literary intention were the epigrams, some of them translations of epigrams now in the Greek Anthology, and some after—a long way after—Martial. But in his hexameter poem on the Moselle, Ausonius has triumphantly vindicated his claim to the name of poet, a claim which might otherwise have been called in question. In the structure of the poem, its invocations to Heaven, its digressions on the fish of the Moselle, on fishing, on the villas on the banks, there is nothing remarkable. But in one or two passages Ausonius has made his mark as a close and appreciative observer of Nature. The Gallic professor, forgetting his books for once, has clearly hung over the edge of the boat to scan the depths and see the sand ribbed by the gentle passing of the waters, the long weeds aslant, quivering with the tugging of the current, and the gravel patches in sharp contrast with the green and mosslike growth of the river bed (55-7)

Ausonius is the poet of ordinary life, his younger contemporary, CLAUDIUS CLAUDIANUS,<sup>4</sup> the poet of great affairs. It is remarkable that, writing at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, he should, in purity of diction and polish of style, have equalled the best poets of the silver age. The fact that he was an Asiatic Greek and a

<sup>4</sup> *Eg Fac iungar nummo ridendo glorificatus*

native of Alexandria, which at first sight seems to increase the paradox, may supply a partial explanation of it. At Alexandria, Greek was the language of ordinary intercourse. Claudian, studying Latin as a foreign literature, acquired a diction unaffected by vulgarisms. Not unnaturally he wrote in Greek before he wrote in Latin; but when in 395 B.C. he came to Rome, he produced a complimentary poem,\* which has no appearance of being a first attempt, and for ten years he continued to write hexameter epics on contemporary events which are a principal source of our knowledge of the reign of Honorius. Chief among these are the poems on the third (395 A.D.), fourth (398 A.D.), and sixth (404 A.D.) consulships of Honorius, and that on the consulship of Stilicho (400 A.D.), those on the external wars which threatened the Western Empire (*de bello Gildonico*, 398 A.D., and *de bello Getico*, 402 A.D.), and the invectives against Rufinus and Eutropius, successively ministers at the court of Byzantium and enemies of Stilicho. Besides these there is the epithalamium on the wedding of Honorius and Stilicho's daughter Maria, and a eulogy on Stilicho's wife Serena, together with three other complimentary poems written for courtiers of Honorius †. The non-official poems are of less significance. Beautiful as are some of the descriptions, the unfinished Ovidian hexameter poem on the rape of Proserpine ‡ is, on the whole, frigid. The fact that all the characters in the piece are deities militates against human interest. It has been observed, moreover, that in the scene of the flower gathering

\* *In consulatum Olybri et Probi*

† *In consulatum Olybri et Probi*, mentioned above, *Epithalamium Palladi et Celerinæ*, *In consulatum Manli Theodori*

‡ The three books bring the story down to the starting of Ceres on the search for her daughter



by Proserpine and the two Goddesses sent to entice her from her place of safety, the flowers are described not so much by their appearance as by their attributes ; in other words, Claudian, abandoning the direct observation of Nature exemplified in Ausonius, reverts to the learned Alexandrian style. This feature is connected with Claudian's place of residence, for the example of his contemporary Nonnus shows that the writing of epics in Greek in this manner still persisted in Egypt.

The poems on contemporary events have much of the artificiality which is associated with official poetry. There is abundant use of celestial machinery. The language is dignified to the point of bombast. Flattery is more systematic and pervasive than in the Augustan court poetry. Moreover, Claudian owes much to literary study. In his complimentary poems he is often indebted to Statius. Thus the epithalamium for Honorius and Maria is modelled on that by Statius for Arruntius Stella and Violentilla. In declamation and satiric invective Lucan and Juvenal point the way for him. When Claudian writes that for a time he doubted whether the world was ruled by divine governance or not, but that the punishment of Rufinus has dispelled his perplexity and "acquitted heaven," he is writing precisely in the manner of Lucan, while the line in which he protests that the consulship of Eutropius is a prodigy more startling than monstrous births, or sheep with human utterance.

*A Eunuch consul, portents all retired,<sup>1</sup>*

(*In Eutropium* I 8)

might well have been penned by Juvenal. Virgil, too, has been closely studied by Claudian, and at times he repro-

*Omnia cessant Eunucho consule monstra*

duces the Virgilian rhythm. Harsher and more clear cut, however, he avoids the subtle irregularities of Virgil \*

But despite traditional expedient and literary reminiscence, Claudian has both individuality and sincerity of feeling. Only by his conviction is his violence to be explained. It is genuine horror of the un-Roman character of the Byzantine Court which bars his invectives against Eutropius; genuine enthusiasm for Roman virtues, and the man whom he conceived as their embodiment, which warms his panegyrics of Stilicho

*Got by such terrors never word he shake  
Unworthy Latium*

(In Consulatum Stilichonis I 294)

That this should have been written by an Alexandrian Greek of a Vandal † is a striking testimony to the absorptive influence of Rome, to which Claudian has given a more deliberate and direct expression in a famous eulogy of the mother city. "She, she alone, has taken the conquered to her bosom, and made men to be one household with one name, then mother not then queen, and called her vassals citizens. To her rule of peace we owe it . . . that we are all one people" ‡

Once again was this note to be sounded, and sounded with equal emphasis, though by a poet far inferior to Claudian. RUTILIUS CLAUDIUS NAMATIUS, a Gaul in high position at Rome, when returning homewards to visit his estates which had been ravaged by the Visigoths, wrote

\* The difference between Claudian's *diserte resane Romam non temere gentis* (de bello Getico, 64), and the line of Virgil on which it is based, *diserte iustitiam moniti et non temere arces* (A vi 620), is typical

† Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 327

‡ The translation is mainly Jebb's

an account of his journey in two books of elegiac verse,\* At the outset the Gaul salutes the city which he is leaving, and celebrates in her precisely that achievement which had already been acclaimed by the Greek. "To diverse nations you have given one country; to fall beneath your sway has proved for lawless folk a gain, and by extending to the vanquished a share in your rights you have made what was a world a city."

When this was written (416 A.D.) five years had elapsed since Rome had been sacked by Alaric. It was only a desperate conservatism that could make Namatian ignore the present, and still hope. In view of the formation of new kingdoms out of the Western Empire, the Visigothic (412 A.D.), and the Burgundian (413 A.D.) in Gaul, to be followed by that of the Vandals in Africa (429 A.D.), and of the separation of Britain from the Empire, it was very far from true to say that all men were citizens of one city.

With Namatian the Græco-Roman Literature which began with Livius and Ennius comes to an end. Its strongest inspiration had been patriotic, and this, if it had revived astonishingly in Claudian, had in Namatian already become belated. Henceforth Latin Literature ceases to be national. Latin was no longer a language whose life was replenished by currents which, rising in the provinces, flowed to Rome. Still used in different countries, it had ceased to be the speech of a nation.

But, indeed, as has been seen above (p. 516), Pagan Literature had been smitten with barrenness since the reign of Marcus Aurelius. During the third century it was among the Christian apologists alone that vigorous expression was to be found. In the fourth century, too,

\* Only seventy lines of Bk. II. are preserved

despite the revival of Pagan letters which culminated at its close, the preponderance of energy and inspiration was with the Christians. There is more thought in the hexameters of PRUDENTIUS (348-410 A D) on the origin of evil (*hamartigenia*) than in all that Claudian ever wrote, and certainly more fervour in the hymns of his daily round (*Cathemeron*) than in the verses which Ausonius\* had published under the same title. External circumstances fostered new developments in Christian Literature. By the decree of Constantine (325 A D.) Christianity became the established religion of the Empire. The struggle against the unbeliever gave place to that against the heretic, and the Christian apologists were succeeded by the Fathers of the Church. Among these—not indeed in HILARY (d 367 A D) —but in AMBROSE (340-397 A D), saint and statesman, JEROME (331-420 A D), ascetic and scholar, and AUGUSTINE (354-430 A D), the synthesis of Christian intellect and emotion—the great minds of the age were to be found. The works of Hilary against the Arians or on the Trinity belong to the history of religious controversy rather than to that of literature. Ambrose's loyalty to the Roman literary traditions is exemplified by his treatise on the duties of priests, which is based on the *de officiis* of Cicero, and his practical character by his commentary on Genesis, which draws moral lessons (whereas Hilary in his commentary on the Psalms had sought to discover hidden meanings), and by the composition of hymns for use in Church.† The works of the two last are monumental

\* Ausonius was only an official Christian

† Twelve are attributed to him. They are in iambic dimeters, mostly in four-line stanzas, frequently, but not regularly, rhymed. Four are certainly his, those beginning *Deus creator omnium*, *Aeternae rerum conditor*, *Veni redemptor gentium*, *Iam surgit hora tertia*

Jerome, by his translation of the Bible from Genesis to the Acts, later known as the Vulgate, provided Western Christianity with a basal document and a powerful literary influence. Not Ciceronian in its Latin (for Jerome strove to turn his back on ancient culture), and modified by the naturalisation of eastern imagery, the Vulgate is vigorous and impressive. Not without reason has it been observed \* that the year 405, which saw its publication, and all but coincides with the last dated poem of Claudian (404), marks "the end of ancient and the complete establishment of Mediæval Latin"

Augustine's *Confessions*, which reveal the action of God in the soul of man, is one of the great autobiographies of the world. His other great work, that on the City of God (*de civitate Dei*), is wider in scope, for it shows the action of God in history. At the same time it exemplifies the superiority of Christianity to Paganism in adaptivity. The new religion and the neglect of the Pagan gods had been held responsible for the sack of Rome by the Goths. Augustine answered the charge in the colossal work in which he developed a new philosophy of history, and exhibited the earthly in its relation to the heavenly city.

Between them Jerome and Augustine facilitated the work of Christian historians. Jerome had assembled the materials and made familiar the facts. Augustine had supplied a philosophy of history. The earliest of the Christian histories (403 A.D.) was a very brief but well written compendium of events from the creation to the consulship of Stilicho by SULPICIUS SEVERUS (about 365-425 A.D.) *The History of the World from Adam to 417 A.D.*, addressed by the Spaniard PAULUS OROSIUS to the Pagans, was inspired by *The City of God* and was, indeed,

\* By Mackail, *Latin Literature*, p. 278

written at the request of Augustine. Orosius seeks to prove in detail what Augustine had laid down as a general proposition, that the pre-Christian ages, too, had had their share of calamities. His selection and interpretation of facts are both prejudiced by his point of view, but his presentation of them is vivid. The treatise of SALVIANUS, a priest of Marseilles, on the divine governance (*de gubernatione Dei*) was written with the same object as the history of Orosius—that is to say, to answer murmurings at the afflictions of the time. But it was written some years later, between the capture of Carthage by the Vandals (439) and the invasion of Gaul by the Huns (451), and the state of the Empire was proportionately more desperate. Salvian no longer argues like Orosius that things had been as bad before the introduction of Christianity, but declares that the present troubles are the well-deserved punishment of the wickedness of his contemporaries, on which he dilates in a satiric vein.

Of a very different character were the writings of APOLLINARIS SIDONIUS (c. 413-480 A.D.). Panegyrist and successful courtier of three emperors who reigned in the West by favour of Ricimer the Sueve, he became a cleric only in middle life, and, under protest, Bishop of Clermont in 472 A.D. His productions show the persistence in Gaul of classical traditions imperilled by barbarism. In his panegyric poems and elegiacs a frigid and vastly inferior Claudian, in his ten decasyllabic pieces a prosaic and diffuse Statius, he is in his letters a would-be imitator of Pliny and Symmachus, surpassing the last indeed in the interest of his matter, for the letters present a rather lively picture of the life of the time, but inferior to both in view at once of the barbarisms and the artificial graces of his modulated prose. BOETHIUS (480-524 A.D.),

author of the last purely literary work in Latin, made his career under the rule of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. Head of an ancient Roman family, consul in 510 A.D., and *princeps senatus*, he was high in the favour of Theodoric, when, suddenly accused of conspiring with the Eastern Emperor to subvert the Gothic Kingdom, he was imprisoned, and eventually executed. In prison he wrote the *Consolation of Philosophy*, a dialogue diversified by poems exhibiting the highest purely Pagan elevation. "Intellectually," says Milman, "Boethius was the last of the Romans, and Roman letters may be said to have expired with greater dignity in his person than the Empire in that of Augustulus." After him literature is used, with hardly an exception, only for utilitarian purposes, law, theology, or monkish chronicles. In the legal sphere the publication of Justinian's Code (529 A.D.), followed in five years by the Digest and the Institutes, summed up the results of nearly a thousand years of Roman law dating from the publication of the Twelve Tables.

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PRINTED AT  
THE BALLANTYNE PRESS  
LONDON & EDINBURGH